



THE LIBERTY "BOYS OF '76"

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second-Class Matter at the New York Post Office, February 4, 1901, by Frank Tousey.

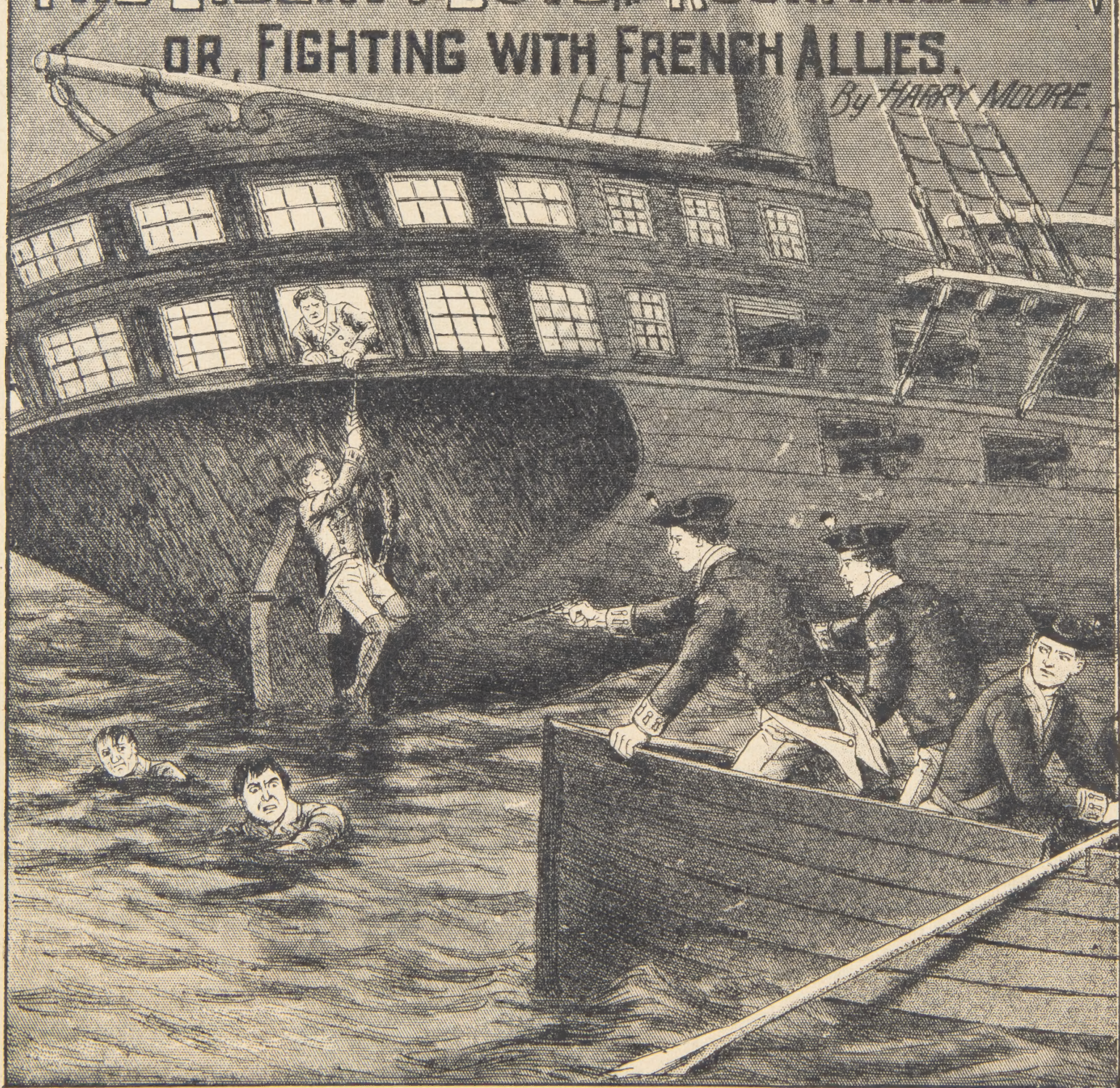
No. 295.

NEW YORK, AUGUST 24, 1906.

Price 5 Cents.

THE LIBERTY BOYS AND ROCHAMBEAU; OR, FIGHTING WITH FRENCH ALLIES.

By HARRY MOORE.



As the boat shot forward Dick heard a splash in the water. Then he saw a British soldier gliding down a rope from one of the stern ports. "Stop or I fire!" cried Dick, leveling his pistol.



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(Above) Three eras of "dime" novel thrillers. No color brightened pages of the books shown in the bottom row. They were published from 1878 to 1896. Those in the second row carried on—with color! They gave way, in 1912, to modern pocket-sized books.

(Right) High-handed skull-duggery and adventure ran riot on the pages of books of Grand-dad's yesterday.



Vol. 6, No. 269
The Mysterious Major, or, Was He Blue or Gray.
BY CORPORAL MORRIS ROYNE.



(Left) Readers, writers, students and collectors—names prominent on the roster of America's great-share pleasures of dime thrillers of yesterday with Charles Braglin, Brooklyn, N. Y. He has more than 20,000 in his collection.

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The Liberty Boys and Rochambeau

—OR—

FIGHTING WITH FRENCH ALLIES

By HARRY MOORE

CHAPTER I.

THE FRENCH FLEET ARRIVES.

It was the early part of the month of July, in the year 1780.

A youth of about nineteen years was riding along one of the hill streets of the old town of Newport, in Rhode Island.

The town, afterward for many years one of the capitals of the state, was a picturesque place even then.

With water on all sides it was not only salubrious, but could be well defended.

Reaching the top of the hill, and in sight of the famous "old mill," as it is called, the youth gazed around him.

Standing at the door of a long, low, old-fashioned double house was a young girl, evidently looking for someone.

As she caught sight of the youth on horseback she waved her hand.

He rode up, dismounted, and said:

"I have great news for you, Alice."

"Say you so, Dick?"

"Yes, indeed?"

"What is it? Don't you see that I am dying to hear it?"

"The French fleet, or a part of it, at least, is expected in a day or so."

"That is really great news."

"Yes, Rochambeau is coming, and then another division now on the other side, and finally a fleet from the West Indies."

"They will bring troops, too, Dick, as Lafayette promised?"

"Yes. Rochambeau is in charge of the troops, and the Chevalier de Lernay is in command of the fleet."

"What do you think their first move will be?"

"They will doubtless make an attack on New York as soon as the ships are here."

"And the Liberty Boys?"

"Will fight with Rochambeau. We shall have French allies now."

"I am glad, Dick. Affairs have been in a deplorable condition for months, and one might well despair of the ultimate success of our cause."

"I never doubted it, Alice, and I do not doubt it now."

"No, Dick; but many do. Troops cannot be procured without paying large bounties, and the men whose terms have expired are not enlisting again."

"Very true; but still I do not doubt for our final success."

"Neither does Bob, and I only wish that there were more like you."

"Where is Bob?"

"He and Edith have gone along the cliffs."

"I have been down in the old town, and it was there that I heard this news."

"It was well received?"

"Generally. There are many Tories in Newport, however."

"Yes. I saw many of them down on Thames street, and on the wharves. They discredit the news."

"But it is true, Dick?"

"I have no doubt of it, Alice, but when Rochambeau and our French allies do arrive we will not hear so much from the Tories."

"I hope they will arrive soon, Dick, for your sake."

"Yes, and so do I. Ah, here come Bob and Edith now."

Dick Slater was the captain of the famous Liberty Boys, a band of patriot youths who had been organized about four years.

They had rendered the cause of independence most valuable service in many parts of the country.

Dick had been on many delicate missions for Washington himself, and enjoyed the confidence of the commander-in-chief as well as that of many of his generals.

Bob Estabrook, Alice's brother, was Dick's first lieutenant, and the two youths were the closest of friends, being like brothers.

The Liberty Boys were now at Newport awaiting the arrival of Rochambeau and the French fleet.

Alice Estabrook and Edith Slater, Dick's sister, were in Newport on a visit to some friends.

This was particularly pleasing to the youths, Alice being Dick's sweetheart, while Edith was Bob's.

Bob and Edith now approached, and Dick told the news of the expected arrival of the fleet.

"The sooner the better, Dick," said Bob, who was a very impetuous youth, and as brave as a lion.

"Yes, indeed."

"Our affairs are in a sad way, Dick."

"True, Bob."

"But now with our French allies we will move upon New York and retake it from the British."

"I trust so," said Dick.

"It is the first thing to do, Dick, and I hope that all the ships will come at once, so that something decisive may be done."

"We shall have to be patient, Bob," said Dick, smiling at the impetuosity of his gallant first lieutenant.

At that moment a pleasant-faced, white-haired lady came out upon the broad veranda and said:

"Well, young people, aren't you most ready for your tea?"

"Yes, Mrs. Dame," said Dick, "but where is Marcia?"

"Out on the beach or cliffs with one of your Liberty Boys, Captain Slater," said the lady.

"Yes, Phil Waters has taken a great fancy to her, I see."

"Phil is a very nice youth, as, I might say, are all the Liberty Boys."

At that moment Phil Waters, the Liberty Boy in question, was seen coming along by the old mill with a pretty young lady by his side.

This was Marcia Dame, the daughter of the lady of the house, and a great friend of the two girls.

On the arrival of the two young people they all went in and had tea in the good old New England fashion.

At a reasonably late hour Dick, Bob, and Phil went to the camp of the Liberty Boys, promising to call again the next day.

On the next day, however, July 10th, there was a boom-

ing of cannon out in the harbor, and the news went around that the French fleet had arrived.

Dick mustered his Liberty Boys, one hundred in number, and they marched down to the wharves, Dick mounted on Major, a superb black horse, which he had captured from the British four years before.

The division of the fleet which had arrived consisted of seven ships of the line, two frigates, and a number of transports containing the troops, five thousand in number.

As soon as the vessels were at anchor, Dick went out in a launch to the flagship with Bob Estabrook.

Going on board, he met a fine-looking man in full uniform, about fifty-five years of age.

Stepping up and saluting, Dick said in French, which he spoke very well:

"I have the honor of addressing the Count de Rochambeau?"

"I am the Count Rochambeau," answered the distinguished-looking officer.

"I am Dick Slater, captain of the Liberty Boys, and this is Bob Estabrook, my first lieutenant."

"I am pleased to meet you, gentlemen."

"I have despatches from General Washington and the Marquis de Lafayette, the confidence of both of whom I enjoy."

"I shall be glad to receive them, captain."

"I and my Liberty Boys are at your service, count, and you have but to command us."

"A thousand thanks. This is the Chevalier de Lerna, commander of the fleet, Captain Slater."

The Chevalier expressed his gratification at meeting the Liberty Boy, and Dick told Rochambeau that as soon as the troops were encamped he would call and receive any orders that the count might give him.

CHAPTER II.

A LESSON IN FRENCH.

Rochambeau came ashore pretty soon, and at sight of the Liberty Boys drawn up in line could not repress his admiration.

"You have indeed a fine body of youths, captain," he said, "and the country is well favored that can command their services."

Rochambeau was himself a veteran, and so he knew whereof he spoke.

"I am pleased that you like their appearance, count," was Dick's answer. "They are as brave as they are noble-looking."

"Oh, they must be, or they would not look so fine, captain. I know a real soldier when I see him, and your Liberty Boys are real soldiers, indeed."

Dick then saluted again, the Liberty Boys did the same at his signal, and then they all marched away, Dick on his splendid horse, and Bob at his side, while the people on the wharf cheered both the French count and the patriot youth.

The troops were landed to the east of the town, their camp being in a fine situation, and extending nearly across the island on which Newport is situated.

The camp of the Liberty Boys was not far from it, and after Dick's formal visit to Rochambeau many of the youths went over to inspect it.

Among the first visitors was a freckle-faced, pug-nosed, jolly-looking young Irishman, who went by the name of Patsy Brannigan.

Mark Morrison, Ben Spurlock, Sam Sanderson, Jack Warren, George Brewster, and Phil Waters were some of his companions.

A most noticeable one, however, was a fat German youth, weighing quite two hundred pounds, who was known as Carl Gookenspieler.

Carl and Patsy were great friends, but were always quarreling, but as words were their only weapons, there was no harm done.

"Now, dhin, bhys," said Patsy, as they entered the French camp, "yez'll see how well Oi get along wid dhe Frinchman."

"But you don't speak French," said Jack Warrer.

"Indade, an' Oi do, Misther Jack," said Patsy.

"I never knew that."

"There's many things yez don't know, an' dhat's wan av dhim, me bhy."

"Oh, well, if you speak French, that's all right."

"Sure, an' it's dhe most iligant Frinch Oi spake, me bhy."

Then they walked on, and pretty soon came to where one of the company's cooks was preparing a meal.

"Shure, dhere's dhe cook," said Patsy. "Oi'll talk to him. Oi want a gridiron, an' Oi'll ax him for dhe loan av wan."

Then Patsy stepped up and said:

"Polly voo fronsay, mooshoo?"

"Oui-oui," was the quick reply.

"Dhin will ye lend me dhe loan av a gridiron?"

The soldier cook looked puzzled, and the Liberty Boys all laughed.

"Vhat sort off Vrench was dot vhat you spoke?" said Carl, with a laugh.

"Shure, an' it's dhe besht, Oi tell yez, but mebbly he's not a Frinchman. Mooshoo?"

"Oui, m'sieu?" said the cook.

"Polly voo fronsay?"

"Oui-oui, m'sieu."

"Well, dhin, will yez lend me dhe loan av a gridiron?"

The Frenchman shrugged his shoulders, and the Liberty Boys laughed again.

"You must ask for your gridiron in French, Patsy," said Jack.

"Shure, an' a Frinch gridiron is no different dhan an Oirish or an Amerikin wan. A gridiron is dhe same in any country."

"Yes, but they don't have the same name for it."

Patsy scratched his head.

"Shure, an' Oi niver thot av dhat," he said.

"But why don't you give him the French for it?"

"Shure, an' didn't Oi? Mooshoo?"

"Comment?"

"Come on, is it? Shure, an' Oi'm here. Polly voo fronsay?"

"Oui-oui, bien oui!"

"Tearin' ages, dhin, av yez polly vooses, phwy won't yez lind me dhe loan av a gridiron?" Patsy burst forth, thoroughly exasperated.

There was another roar from the Liberty Boys, and then Jack said:

"He doesn't speak the same kind of French that you do, Patsy. His is not so good. Why don't you try him on signs?"

"Shure, an' dhat's not such a bad idee, Jack, me bhy."

"No, I think it's pretty good."

"Av coorse his Frinch is not as good as moine."

"Well, it's different, anyhow," laughed Jack.

"Dhin Oi'll thry him on dhe sign language, me bhy."

"Yes, do."

The other Liberty Boys looked on, interested as well as amused.

Then Patsy began to make signs.

He spread out his fingers, crossed his hands, held them over the fire, and began to make a sputtering noise.

The soldier cook smiled, went into the tent, and came back with a box of salve.

Patsy was disgusted, while the others laughed.

"Try it again, Patsy," said Jack.

"Give me a tablet and a pencil," he said.

The articles were forthcoming in a moment.

Then Patsy drew what he considered a fine representation of a gridiron, and handed it to the cook.

The Frenchman took it, smiled, went away, and returned with a fish-net.

The laughter of the Liberty Boys was greater than ever. Then Dick came along and inquired the cause of their hilarity.

Jack told him.

The youth smiled, and put the question properly in French to the cook.

Then the soldier smiled all over his face, and brought the required article.

"Is that what you want?" he asked Patsy.

"Shure, an' dhat's a gridiron, fasht enuff," said Patsy, "but Oi don't want it at all, at all."

"Then why did you ask for it?" with a laugh.

"Becos Oi wanted to see av dhe cook shpoke as good Frinch as meself," said the laughing Irishman.

"Maybe you don'd spoke Vrench more better as you was spoke English alretty," said Carl.

"Go on wid yez, Cookyspieler," said Patsy. "Shure, an' it's dhe foinest language Oi shpake."

"Maybe dot was so, but der mans gould understood dot not, I bet you."

The others laughed, and they went on.

There was much to interest them in the camp.

It was like a village, and everything was as clean and orderly as could be.

The troops were a fine-looking lot of men, and evidently had made war their business.

They were far superior to the Hessians Dick had seen, and treated him most courteously.

He conversed with many of the officers and men, and was greatly pleased.

Later the girls came to the camp, and Dick and Bob took them around.

They were delighted.

"With troops like these," said Edith, "our fortunes should be bettered."

"I think they will be," said Dick. "The French are our friends, and will provide troops, money, ships, and everything we want."

"And not for hire, like those dreadful Hessians," said Alice.

"No, the French love liberty, and have a feeling for any one who is fighting for it."

"I am anxious to see the rest of the fleet come, and then move on to New York," said Bob.

"Yes, that is the first move to be made, no doubt," said Dick.

Rochambeau himself was of the opinion that his should be done, but it was an important move, and must not be undertaken until they were well prepared, and meantime all they could do was to wait.

CHAPTER III.

A RACE WITH THE TIDE.

Phil Waters and Marcia Dame were walking along the beach at the foot of the cliffs.

There was a good stretch of white beach, and here and there were picturesque nooks among the rocks.

Many of these had legends connected with them which Marcia told the youth as they sauntered on.

At last they sat on a great flat rock, and watched the waves coming in.

Out from shore a little ways there were sunken rocks over which the surf dashed.

Closer inshore there was a deep indentation through which the water dashed to a hidden cave under the cliffs.

At times, when the sea was high, the water would spout out through narrow openings in the cliff above.

This was called the spouting rock, and was one of the attractions of the shore.

The two were sitting there talking when all of a sudden the spray washed upon the rock at their feet.

They had taken little note of time, being so pleasantly engaged.

Then Phil looked up.

"We must go back," he said, "or the tide will catch us."

There was a little cove here, with a white and shining beach.

It was good walking, but there was a point of cliff to be passed some rods distant.

Toward this they made their way.

When they reached it they found that they could not get beyond.

The water covered the rocks as its foot to a depth of two or three feet.

The rocks themselves were green and slimy, and most treacherous.

"We can't get around there," said Phil, "unless I were to carry you in my arms."

"No, it is too dangerous," said Marcia. "Besides, see how the water dashes upon them."

"Then we will go the other way."

They hastily retraced their steps.

When they reached the rock where they had been sitting, the water covered one-third of it.

"There is a place beyond where we can reach the beach," said Phil.

They hurried on till they came to the sluice where the waves made their way to the spouting rock.

It was too wide to spring across.

The rocks were too slippery to descend to the water, where it was narrower.

A fall in that rushing flood among jagged rocks meant certain death.

"We can't get around," said Phil doggedly.

"Then we must go back and sit on the rocks till the tide falls," said Marcia.

A look at the rocks above his head showed the youth the fallacy of this plan.

The high-water mark was nearly even with his shoulders.

And the rocks themselves were almost sheer.

He began looking for some cleft where he could climb to the top of the cliffs.

"We can't stay here," he said. "The water covers these rocks, and will wash us off."

Marcia was terrified, yet calm.

"What can we do?" she asked.

"If I can find an opening," said the youth, "we can climb to the fields above, and walk back to the town."

His eyes had wandered along the line of cliff, seeking an opening.

"Yonder is a place, I think," he said.

The water was encroaching upon them, and at one point they had but a narrow shelf between the rocks and the sea.

They crossed it in safety, Phil taking Marcia's hand.

Just beyond there was a deep cleft in the cliff.

Phil climbed up a foot or two, helping Marcia to follow.

They were not yet above high-water mark, however.

And at that moment a larger wave than usual dashed at their very feet.

"We shall have to go still higher," said Phil quietly.

He knew his danger but did not wish to alarm his companion.

He assisted the young lady to a shelf a yard higher, but here it seemed as if they must stop.

They were even with the high-water mark.

And above their heads was a jutting rock which it seemed impossible to pass.

Phil looked to the right and left.

A yard or so to the right the shelf was a few inches wide only.

Here the jutting rock fell back and might be grasped.

It was but a slight chance, however.

"Wait a moment," said the youth.

Then he walked to the end of the ledge.

He had just space enough to stand.

Reaching up, he found that there were points which he could grasp, and so raise himself to a safe place above.

"Do you think you can stand where I am?" he asked.

"It seems very narrow."

"You will have to stand but a short time."

"And then?"

"I can draw you up to a place of safety above high-water mark."

"Is it our only chance?"

"Yes; and time presses."

"Then I will take the risk."

Phil then climbed to the ledge above.

Then he took off his belts.

"Now," he said, lying flat on the shelf above.

Marcia came to the end of the ledge.

Phil had lowered his belts.

"They are good, honest leather," he said. "You need not be afraid to trust to them."

Marcia grasped the belts firmly with both hands.

Then Phil drew her up inch by inch, at last reaching down and catching her under the arms.

"I can help myself a little now," she said.

At that moment the spray dashed over the spot where she had been standing a few moments before.

In another moment she was on the ledge at Phil's side.

"Thank heaven!" said the youth fervently.

There seemed to be little chance of their getting higher, but at least they were safe.

Phil looked over and saw the water coming higher and higher, till it covered the ledge where they had been.

The sun was going down, and before long it would be dark.

"We shall have to stay here five or six hours," said Phil.

"If it can't be helped we shall have to endure it," said Marcia.

The cleft extended up to the top of the cliff, but was very steep.

There was gravel and jagged rocks, and a climb up these seemed very risky.

"If there were only some one above," thought Phil. "But it is a chance in a thousand."

People did walk along the top of the cliffs, however, and why shouldn't some one be there now?

Perhaps the chance was not as slight as he thought.

"There might be some one above," he said. "I am going to call."

"There can be no harm in it," was the girl's reply.

Then Phil shouted.

"Hello, there! Is there any one about?"

There was no answer.

In a few moments Phil repeated the hail, shouting up the cleft.

Twice he did this.

Then he heard a hail from above.

"Hello! Who's down there at all, at all?"

It was Patsy who called.

"It's I, Phil, and Miss Dame. We were caught by the tide."

"Shure, an', dhat's a quare place to be," and then Phil saw Patsy's face at the top of the cleft.

"So it is; but run and get a rope."

"Shure, an' Oi will, for it'll be heard lines to shtay dhere all noight. Dhere do be a house beyant, so have patience." In a quarter of an hour Patsy returned with a couple of men, stout ropes, and lanterns.

It was now growing dark.

The ropes were lowered, with a lantern on the end of one, and Phil secured it about Marcia's waist, and told Patsy to haul away.

A few minutes later Phil himself was taken up.

Little was said on the way home, but the feeling between the two young people was deeper than ever.

CHAPTER IV.

AIDED BY THE FOG.

It had happened by the merest chance that Patsy had heard Phil's hail.

The path along the top of the cliffs was quite a little distance from the top of the cleft.

There were people passing in either direction, but none of them heard Phil.

Patsy was not sure that he did hear when he came along.

He listened, and then he was sure that he had heard some one calling.

He looked about him, saw a gully, and advanced toward it.

Then he heard the call again, and answered it.

Phil heard, and called up again.

Then Patsy ran off to obtain assistance, and Phil was relieved from a very unpleasant situation.

"Shure, an' phwin folks do be in love," he said to Carl later, "dhey do think av nothin' else."

"Yah, dot was so."

A day or so later Rochambeau received a despatch from Washington.

It was the belief of the commander-in-chief that a feint might be made at attacking New York.

It was his opinion that the British might withdraw their ships and thus give him an opportunity to come down from the highlands and capture the city.

Sir Henry Clinton was then in command, and many of the ships under Arbuthnot were away from the city.

The withdrawal of the rest would leave the city more or less unprotected.

The idea was feasible, and Rochambeau decided to try it, at the general's suggestion.

There was little for Dick and the Liberty Boys to do in Newport.

The youths were glad of an opportunity to distinguish themselves, therefore.

Dick offered his services to the count, and they were gladly accepted.

When a number of the French vessels set sail in a day or so, therefore, Dick and the Liberty Boys were on board.

Phil was sorry to leave Newport on Marcia's account, but glad to be doing something once more.

Alice and Edith concluded to remain a little longer.

"You will probably be back again soon," said Alice to Dick.

"Very likely. At any rate, you will soon learn whether we shall be or not."

The ships set sail, and Dick was in high spirits.

There were a good many Tories in Newport, and it was quite likely that some of these got word to the British of the sailing of the French ships.

At any rate, when they were in the Sound, they came across a number of the enemy's vessels.

There was an even number of them, and the French commander concluded to engage them.

The ships were stripped for action, and preparations for the fight were begun.

Scarcely had one or two shots been exchanged, however, when a heavy fog settled down.

It was impossible to see a vessel's length ahead.

Under these circumstances there could be no engagement.

Dick was greatly disappointed.

The French vessels withdrew, and awaited the lifting of the fog.

The vessel on which were Dick and the Liberty Boys anchored not far from shore.

Lookouts were posted, for it was likely that the enemy might send boats and try to cut one of the ships.

The fog was thick and impenetrable, and seemed to grow denser every minute.

Then night came on, and the darkness was denser than ever.

Dick was on deck with Bob, Mark, Phil and Ben Spurlock, when he heard a suspicious sound from the water.

It was the dip of oars.

Beckoning to the French sailors near him to keep silent, he listened again.

Pretty soon he heard the sound again.

The boat was one of those of the enemy, no doubt.

The French had not launched any.

Leaning over the rail, he said softly, but distinctly:

"Boat ahoy! Where are you?"

There was a profound silence for a moment.

Then a voice answered, out of the fog:

"I only wish we knew. Is that the Valiant?"

"Yes, we are valiant," said Dick. "Can you see us?"

"No."

"Come aboard. Have you lost your way?"

"Yes. We were sent out from the Vigilant."

"How many are you?"

"One. We've lost the others."

"Come aboard. You will only get lost worse than ever if you don't."

"Aye, aye. Show a light over the side."

Dick gave a few hurried orders in whispers to the Frenchmen.

A lieutenant came up, and the Liberty Boy quickly explained the situation.

Lights were lowered over the side, and Dick called out.

Then the dip of oars was heard again.

Pretty soon the dim outlines of the boat were seen lighted up by the lanterns.

A companion-ladder was quickly lowered over the side.

"Come aboard," said Dick.

The other Liberty Boys stood just behind him.

The French lieutenant and half a dozen sailors stood close at hand.

The boat glided alongside.

The men peaked their oars, and a midshipman and two officers came up the companion-ladder.

As soon as they reached the deck they were seized.

One or two of the sailors followed.

One got on deck before he discovered the trap into which he had fallen.

Then the other jumped back into the boat, crying:

"By Jove! it's one of the Frenchmen, sure as I live!"

The boat pulled away in great haste.

The prisoners were quickly hurried below.

Their capture had been effected very cleverly.

The French lieutenant complimented Dick highly upon it. The prisoners were greatly chagrined over the way they had been tricked.

"You lied to us," said one to Dick. "You said your ship was the Valiant."

"I said we were valiant," laughed Dick, "and so we are."

"It was a very shabby trick."

The fog lifted the next morning, and the ships proceeded on their way.

They saw nothing of the enemy, but pretty soon a boat came out from shore with a messenger.

News had been received of the arrival of Arbuthnot's fleet at New York.

It was much superior to their own, and hence the intended advance upon New York was abandoned.

The French vessels at once returned to Newport.

CHAPTER V.

AN ESCAPE PREVENTED.

"I thought you would be back again soon," said Alice to Dick, when next they met at Mrs. Dame's.

"Well, we accomplished something, at any rate," said Dick.

"Say you so?"

"Yes, we took three or four prisoners.

"Well, that is something. How did it happen if there was no fight?"

Dick related the incident of the capture.

Alice laughed heartily, and said:

"So the fog came to your aid?"

"Yes, but thinking the thing up quickly was something. There was very little time for deliberation."

"Oh, am not belittling your accomplishment," said Alice.

"I was thinking of it from the point of view of our neighbors."

"What mean you?" asked Dick.

"Why, the people next door are great Tories, and I was just thinking how they would look at it."

"There are many Tories in town," said Dick.

"Yes, these people seem very nice. I rather like the girls, but the young man is inclined to patronize us."

"Bob would like to hear that," laughingly.

"Oh, brother Bob would have no patience with him. Fortunately, the young gentleman never comes when he is here."

"No, I don't think it would be pleasant for him."

Pretty soon Bob and Edith, and Phil and Marcia joined the others on the broad piazzas.

They talked without restraint, and gave no thought to the fact that there might be listeners.

Pretty soon, however, Dick noticed a young man on the piazza of the next house.

They were then talking of the British prisoners on board the French flagship.

Dick looked significantly at the other house, and then said in a low tone:

"Talk of something else. I think that the young man next door is listening."

"Who is he?" asked Bob.

"The family are Tories," said Dick, "though Alice says that the girls are very nice."

Then they began talking of other things.

The young man did not remain very long.

"I don't know, of course," said Dick, "but I think that the young man was interested in what we were talking of."

"Well, all he found out was that we had taken some prisoners," said Bob.

"That might be enough."

No more was said at that time, and the subject was dismissed.

That evening Dick and Bob were walking along Thames street with Phil and Mark.

There were a number of people on the street, which was quite narrow.

Pretty soon Dick heard a young man in front of him say:

"We'll have to get them out."

"Yes, I think it can be done."

"They are not kept closely confined. I was on the ship to-night. I used young Slater's name."

"Oh, did you?" thought the youth, giving Bob a nudge to keep him quiet.

The first lieutenant of the Liberty Boys was apt to speak his mind very freely.

Dick did not want that he should say anything just then. As it happened, the young fellows entered an eating-house, and Dick and the others passed on.

"That young Tory has some plan of liberating the British prisoners," said Dick.

"I suppose so."

"We must prevent it."

"I would like nothing better."

Dick pondered for a moment.

"He knows the location of the French vessels."

"Yes."

"We must patrol the harbor. It is too late to do anything to-night."

"No doubt."

"To-morrow, however, we must warn the officers not to give the prisoners too much liberty."

"No, for they may take advantage of it."

"I think it will be as well to keep a lookout ourselves before we warn the officers."

"Say you so?"

"Yes," thoughtfully. "These Tories may try to put their plans into execution at once."

"Then we will block it."

"That is what I propose."

"The Tory heard what we were saying this afternoon," said Bob.

"Yes, and so knew that there were prisoners."

"Exactly. And now he means to liberate them."

"If we will let him," laughed Bob; "but I don't think we will."

Dick made his arrangements that night before going back to the camp.

He arranged with a boatman at one of the wharves to have a light skiff ready the next morning.

It was before daybreak when he and Bob, Phil, Mark and Ben Spurlock left the camp.

They galloped quickly into the town, putting up their horses at a tavern.

Dick had spoken to the hostler the night before, and the man was waiting for them.

Then they hurried to the wharf, and found the boat waiting for them, as had been agreed upon.

It was still a little before daybreak when they glided out upon the water.

Bob had the oars, and Dick was up at the bow instead of in the stern.

As the first gray light of dawn began to appear Dick thought he heard the dip of oars.

He looked ahead of him, but the quarter of one of the French frigates cut off his view.

"Pull ahead quick, Bob!" the youth said.

Bob bent lustily on the oars.

As the boat shot forward Dick heard a splash in the water.

Then he saw a British soldier gliding down a rope from one of the stern ports.

"Stop or I fire!" cried Dick, leveling his pistol.

It was now light enough to see two men in the water swimming toward shore.

"Frigate ahoy!" shouted Dick.

The man gliding down the rope from the frigate's stern port hesitated.

"Cover those men in the water!" said Dick.

Mark and Ben at once leveled their pistols at the swimmers.

"Ahoy!" cried Dick, again in a loud voice.

Bob dipped his oars and held water.

Then some one appeared on the frigate's deck.

Dick quickly explained matters.

"There goes another boat!" cried Phil, who was in the bow.

"Make any attempts to get away and you are dead men!" cried Dick to the swimmers.

The alarm was quickly spread, and a yawl was lowered. The swimmers were picked up, and the man on the rope was taken in at the port.

"Who was in the other boat?" asked Dick.

"That young Tory," said Phil.

CHAPTER VI.

OUT WITH THE FLEET.

The Tory youth's plot to liberate the British prisoners had failed.

Dick's forethought had prevented its accomplishment.

The French officers complimented him very highly.

The prisoners were kept more closely confined after this.

Before they had been allowed a great deal of liberty.

Dick saw the Tory youth that day on Thames street.

He glared savagely at the Liberty Boy, but said nothing.

Bob was with Dick, and said:

"The next time you try to liberate prisoners of war you will run the chance of being shot."

The young Tory scowled, but went on without a word.

The youths saw the prisoners that day, and one of them said:

"You were very clever in catching us the other day. How did you happen to suspect us?"

"First, because I always suspect a redcoat."

"And next?"

"Because I overheard your over-zealous friend talking about getting you out."

"Some folks talk too much."

The next day, when they were all in camp near the woods to the east of the town, Patsy suddenly said:

"Shure, an' it's a tajious business waitin' here doin' little or nothin', Cookyspiller."

"Yah, dot was so. Off dere was nghding been, dot was all righd."

"An' we have all dhat we can ate an' dhrink, an' so dhere's no need av goin' foragin', begorra."

"Nein, dot was no uses."

"Phwativer shall we do dhin to pass dhe toime away, Dootchy?"

"What you want to dooded?"

"Anything."

"Vell, let's dooded dot."

"Yis, but phwat is it?"

"Anydings vhat you lige."

"Yis, but Oi don't know phwat it is at all, at all."

"Was you wanted me to toldt you what you was to did?"

"Shure, an' Oi'll be glad to have yez, me bhy."

"Vell, I was toldt you what we was dooded vor der dimes to pass away."

"G'wan, dhin, an' tell me, Cookyspiller, an' don't be sittin' dhere kapin' me guessin' phwat it's goin' to be."

"Den we was had von off dose chows by der teater vhat dey was had by New York vhen we vhas dere alretty."

"A play, is it, me bhy?"

"Yah, dot was been der t'ing, ein blay choost lige der teater."

"An' phwere wor yez going to get dhe stage, Cookyspiller?"

"Did you wanted a stage, Batsy?"

"Shure, an' we do. Ivery theayther do have one, me bhy."

"Vell, how was a ox-cart dooded, off we don'd could ein stage getted?"

"G'wan!" laughed Patsy. "It's not a stagecoach we do be wantin', but a platform to act on, dhe same as all dhem fellers have."

"Oh, yah, now I was understood dot. I t'ought you was wanted ein horse und vagon."

"Well, we'll have dhe shtage in dhe woods, an' dhe bhys can sit around. Shure, Oi did see some foine plays in Dublin, an' we'll do some av dhim."

"Yah, dot was all righd been. I was saw some off dose blays by New York vhen we was dere, und we gould some off dem had."

"Yis, me bhy, an' we'll play Julius Sayser, where dhe imperor gets shtabbed in dhe back be dhe conspiraythors. Dhat will be your part."

"Was I been in der pack stabbed? Nein, I was loog on und saw some oder veller got dot."

"Shure, an' dhey don't shtab yez for throe. Cookyspiller. Dhey on'y purtind to do it."

"Ach, dot was only mage pelief?"

"Dhat's all, me bhy. Oi'll be wan av dhe fellies phwat does dhe shtabbin', me bhy. Dhere was eight or tin av dhim."

"Maybe off somepodies was ein mistook mage und shtab me vor fair, I was got mad."

"Shure, an' dhey won't do it, me bhy," and then Patsy told his plan to the rest, who thought it very fine, and were most eager to carry it out.

There was, of course, no copy of the play of Julius Cæsar to be had in the camp of the Liberty Boys.

Many of them knew it, however, or part of it, at any rate.

They agreed with Patsy that it would be a fine thing to give a representation of the immortal tragedy.

An open space in the woods was selected for the stage.

In front of this on the grass and on fallen truñks the spectators were to sit.

Patsy was to be Brutus, although he did not know a word of the part, and Carl was to be the Cæsar, simply because Patsy said so.

Bob said he would play Antony, Mark was to be Cassius, and Ben, George, Harry and others also had parts.

Bob knew many of the speeches, and he was appointed to instruct and rehearse the actors.

When he saw that he would have to learn something, Patsy said:

"Whisper, Bob, me bhy. Aren't dhere some av dhe Sina-tors dhat don't say anything at all, at all?"

"Certainly."

"An' did dhey shtab Sayser in dhe back?"

"Of course."

"Well, dhin, Oi'll be wan av dhim."

"Very well," said Mark.

"We have a very appropriate Cæsar," said Bob to Mark. "He says, 'Let me have men about me that are fat,' which shows that he must have been fat himself."

"He'll be the 'noblest Roman of them all,' in very truth," laughed Mark.

Carl had very little idea as to what he was to do except that he was to be stabbed and pretend to die.

"Dot's all righd," he said. "I was choost fall down und stayed dere lige I was deadt alretty. Dot was a easy t'ing to dooded."

Not much time was lost in rehearsals.

The idea was projected in the morning, and the representation was to take place at night.

Campfires were lighted, the spectators took their places, and the tragedy began.

The regular order of events was not followed.

The quarrel between Brutus and Cassius, the oration over the dead body of Cæsar, and the conspiracy were all given before the scene of the assassination.

Then Patsy, Carl and a dozen of the Liberty Boys in tent-cloth togas came upon the scene.

They all rushed upon Carl with wooden swords, and he fell upon the greensward.

Then Bob prepared to give one of the speeches of Antony. He was getting along finely in it when Carl suddenly

rolled over, for a garter snake crawled past his head.

"Kape shtill, Cookyspiller, yez are dead," said Patsy, in a whisper.

Then Carl sat up.

"Maybe I was deadt," he said, "but I don't was going to be bited by ein shnake, off I was. I dinks he was got in mein ear alretty."

The tragedy came to an abrupt ending after that, the spectators being obliged to laugh so heartily that they could not take anything seriously afterward.

"Shure, an' Oi moight have known dhat yez would sphoil annything dhat yez wor in, Cookyspiller, said Patsy.

"Vor why I shpoil dot? Was dot Yulius Cæsar bited mit ein shnake?"

"Not dhat Oi know av, me bhy."

"Well, off dot was not in der blay been, den it was not righd dot I should bited been, und dot was vor why I rolled ofer alretty."

"But shure dhey wor all laffin, an' dhere's nothin' funny phwin a man doies, begorra."

When Dick and his companions returned he was made acquainted with what had occurred during his absence.

CHAPTER VII.

PATSY BECOMES SEASICK.

In the course of a few days the British fleet under Arbuthnot appeared outside the harbor.

They were superior in number to the French fleet, and simply blockaded them.

Washington had intended to move upon New York when the fleet was withdrawn, but Sir Henry Clinton did not move any of his troops, and so the movement was abandoned.

The fleet was bottled up, as it were, in Newport harbor, and now news came that the second division was blockaded in Brest in the same manner.

The French allies were of no use under the circumstances, but neither Washington nor Rochambeau despaired of their ultimate efficiency.

As there was work elsewhere for Dick and the Liberty Boys, the youth determined to leave Newport and go to other fields.

Bob and Dick were walking up Capitol Hill toward the Dame mansion when they met young Wheeler, as the Tory youth was called.

"How do you like being bottled up?" he said sneeringly. "Fine use your French fleet is now, isn't it?"

"Your British fleet is of no use, either," was Bob's answer. "We can wait as long as you can."

"Fine lot of allies the French are, too."

"They are preferable to your hirelings of Hessians. We do not have to offer them money to fight."

"Your Mr. Washington is no gentleman."

Then Bob promptly knocked the braggart down.

A number of his sympathizers rushed up, intending to do Bob bodily harm.

The Liberty Boy quickly showed them that he could handle two or three of their sort at once.

Others came upon the scene, but Patsy, Carl, Mark, Phil and a dozen others came tearing down the hill at that moment, and the Tories were put to flight.

"Shure, an' Oi wor shpoilin' fur a foight," said Patsy, "an' dhe very minnit Oi get here it's all over."

"Yah, dot was so mit me, also," said Carl. "What is was all about?"

"Oh, that young Tory upstart undertook to insult me," said Bob, "and I forgot myself so far as to knock him down. He wasn't worth it."

The Liberty Boys were to leave Newport the next day.

This time Alice and Edith were sure that they would not return so soon.

They would return to their homes as soon as they could do so conveniently, but in the meantime they were welcome to remain with Marcia as long as they chose.

The young lady was sorry to part with Phil, but she, of course, would not keep him from his duty.

The two young people had grown very fond of each other, and it was likely that there would be a closer friendship between them some day.

Their parting, therefore, partook of a certain sadness, but both hoped to meet again in the near future.

The Liberty Boys went away with colors flying, and the patriot people of the old town wished them a hearty good-by.

For six months they worked loyally in other fields, gaining new laurels and adding to their fame.

Then, in January, 1781, the long blockade was raised.

A severe snowstorm scattered Arbuthnot's fleet, wrecking one ship of the line, and dismasting others.

The French fleet was now able to look about, and Count Rochambeau wrote to Washington at New Windsor that the Chevalier Destouches, who commanded the fleet, proposed to send three or four ships to the Chesapeake.

Dick and the Liberty Boys were in camp at the time, and the general sent word to him that he could go with the ships if he chose.

The Liberty Boys were glad to be with Rochambeau and the French allies again, and made all haste to return to Newport.

They reached the old town in due season, finding it very different, however, than upon their last visit.

Now it was winter, the streets were buried in snow, the trees were bare, the cliffs were bleak and uninviting, and the surf dashed angrily upon the rocks and beaches.

"Shure, an' it's not dhe same place at all, at all," said Patsy. "But dhere do be foightin' ahead for us, an' dhat's all Oi'm thinking of."

Washington, wishing to compass the capture of Arnold, advised that Destouches should send his whole fleet, and that Rochambeau should send off a thousand of his men with artillery, promising to send twelve hundred of his own men to co-operate with him.

The French, however, acting upon their own impulses, decided to send ships post-haste to Chesapeake Bay.

Dick and the Liberty Boys went with this division, commanded by De Tilly.

The frigates set off in great haste, and began to feel the stress of weather at once.

Poor Patsy, brave as he was, could not stand seasickness, of which he soon had a bad attack.

"Shure, an' Oi wor niver cut out fur a sailor," he complained. "Put me on land an' Oi'm not afeared av anything, but on dhe wather, begorra, Oi'm dhat——"

"Vhat was der madder, Batsy?" asked Carl.

"Phwat do yez t'ink?"

"Off I was knowed dot I didn't was asked you."

"Well, Oi'm saysick, dhat's phwat's dhe matther," and Patsy ran away.

Carl went up to him, and said:

"I sayed, Batsy?"

"Well, phwat is it?" wiping his eyes.

"I toldt you somedings goot for dot seasickness."

"Phwat is it, Cookyspiller?"

"You was had to eat somedings."

"Go on wid yez; Oi cudn't."

"Yah, you must dooded dot."

"Oi cudn't, Oi tell yez."

"You must somedings on your shtummick had, I toldt you."

"Go on, Oi tell yez; Oi can't howld nothing on it."

"You choost waited ein minute, und I brought you somedings."

Then Carl ran off.

Patsy looked very miserable.

Pretty soon Mark came up.

"What's the matter, Patsy?" he asked.

"Shure, Mark, me bhy, Oi'm dhat sick dhat Oi——"

"You stay on deck, Patsy, and you will be all right," advised the youth.

"Shtay on deck, is it? Wid dhe ship rowlin' an' tumblin' dhat way dhat Oi can't shtay on me feet? Begorra, yez'll have to give me betther advice dhan dhat, me bhy."

"That's the best thing for you," said the youth.

"Shure, an' Oi can't do it."

Then Mark went away.

Pretty soon Carl came back.

He had something in his hand.

"Here you vas, Batsy," he said.

"Phwat have yez got dhere, Cookyspiller?"

"Eat it und don'd toldt me some gvestions."

Patsy took the thing in Carl's hands.

It was a piece of salt pork.

"For dhe love av glory, me bhy, phwat will Oi do wid dhat?"

"You was eated it, pull der string, und——"

Patsy ran away.

"Now, dot was vunny been," said Carl. "I was saw dot tried a gouple off dimes alretty, und it always was mage a man felt bedder off it don'd was kill him."

"Go on wid yez," said Patsy.

In a minute or two Ben Spurlock came up.

He was one of the liveliest and jolliest of all the Liberty Boys.

"Hello, Patsy," he said. "You seem to be in trouble."

"Shure, an' Oi am, Ben, me bhy."

"What is it?"

"Shure, an' Oi'm saysick."

"Oh, that's nothing."

"It is not?"

"No."

"Have yez iver had it?"

"No."

"Dhin how do yez know av it is nothing or no?"

"Why, I have seen people seasick, and they never died of it."

"Mebbe dhey don't, me bhy, but Oi'll wager dhat dhey wished dhey wud."

"You just go and lie down in your bunk for an hour or so, and you'll feel better."

"Shure, an' Mark jusht now towld me to shtay on deck."

"Did he?"

"Yis, an' dhe Dootchman towld me to ate a piece av salt pork."

"That was very foolish of you, Patsy."

"Shure, an' Oi didn't ate it. Phwat do yez t'ink Oi am, a shark?"

Ben went away laughing.

Then Sam Sanderson came up.

"Oi'm saysick, dhat's phwat's dhe matther wid me, av yez want to know," said Patsy.

"I knew that without your telling me," laughed Sam.

"Well, Oi thought yez moight ax me. Ivery wan most have done it."

"Well, what are you doing for it?"

"Shure, an' Oi dunno phwat to do entoirely, me bhy."

"Don't do anything, Patsy," said the Liberty Boy.

"Don't do anything, is it?"

"That's it."

"Shure, an' Oi niver knew before how many different kounds av advice Oi cud get for dhe wan thing."

"How is that?"

"Shure, Mark tells me to shtay on deck; Ben tells me to go below; you say to do nothin' at all, at all, an' Cookyspiller axes me to ate a piece av salt pork."

"Well, try a little of them all, and see which works best," said Sam.

"An' shure av dhey don't any av dhim work, Sam?"

"Then don't try them again, that's all."

"Shure, an' it's all roight to tell me to do nothin' at all, at all, but Oi can't do it. Oi've got to do something."

Then he rushed away, and was not seen again for some time.

"It's foighting Oi loike," he said, when he appeared again, "but Oi loike to pick out me own place for it. Av Oi wor dhe whole Amerikin army now, an' wan little bit av a redcoat wor to come afther me, Oi'd——"

Then he ran away again, and was not visible until the weather changed, and they were in warmer waters.

CHAPTER VIII.

WITHIN AN INCH OF FAME.

The French ships were making a gallant dash for Chesapeake Bay.

Arnold would have been captured had he not received timely word from Arbuthnot.

De Tilly entered the bay, but Arnold took his ships into Elizabeth River.

It was too shallow to allow the French vessels to pursue him.

The frigates could not get within ten miles of the traitor.

Dick was greatly disappointed.

He had fought under Arnold, and had admired his bravery.

He now despised the man, as did all true Americans, and would have been glad to capture him.

The captain of the vessel on which were Dick and the Liberty Boys was as eager as Dick himself.

His ship was not as large as the others.

He thought, therefore, that he might get up the river.

After a short consultation, he pushed on.

Dick was in high spirits.

If he and the Liberty Boys could assist in the traitor's capture it would give added glory to their already brilliant record.

The frigate pushed on, therefore, but at length got aground.

This was a great disappointment.

Dick was not disheartened, however.

It was possible to get the ship off, and meantime something might be done.

"I will take two-score or more of my Liberty Boys," he said to the French captain, "go up the river, and capture the traitor."

It was a bold scheme, and one worthy of the gallant youth.

Dick took the very pick of the youths, and set off at once. There were fifty of them, and all were strong, athletic youths, and as brave as lions.

It was possible that by a sudden dash like this they might surprise Arnold in his quarters, carry him off, and make as quick a return.

It was worth trying, at any rate.

Bob, Mark, Ben, Sam, Phil, Jack, Patsy, Carl, and all the bravest and best of the Liberty Boys were with Dick.

They made their way rapidly along the river, knowing the advantage of speed, and mile after mile was quickly covered.

They had come within a short distance of the British ships when Dick took Bob, Phil, Mark and Ben and went ahead to reconnoiter.

Creeping forward silently, they suddenly fell upon a British sentry, and captured him.

"Where are Arnold's quarters?" asked Dick.

The man refused to answer at first.

Dick put a pistol to his head and said sternly:

"Answer me at once or you are a dead man!"

The sentry gave the required information.

The traitor's quarters were in a house on shore, a short distance from the ships.

The location was made plain to Dick by the frightened sentry.

The youth sent Mark and Phil back to bring up the balance of his force.

Then he crept forward to get the location of the place well in his mind.

He found it without difficulty.

Then, to his great surprise, as well as gratification, he saw Arnold himself come out upon the broad front porch of the old house.

He at once hurried back to the others.

In a few moments the youths were all assembled.

"Now!" said Dick, "one quick, sudden dash, and the prize is ours."

They pressed forward, and soon came in sight of the house. Then they dashed up and surrounded the place.

In another moment the traitor would have been within their grasp.

But before the final move could be made, there was a roar, and a body of British troops, five hundred in number, were seen dashing along the road.

The sentries had been overpowered, but to enter the quarters now meant death and the failure of the project.

Dick quickly gave the order to retreat.

The Liberty Boys stood for a moment and fired a volley.

Crash—roar!

Several redcoats were seen to fall.

For a moment there was confusion in their ranks.

This moment was taken advantage of by Dick.

The Liberty Boys retreated in good order.

The redcoats came flying after them, but the youths took to the woods.

They still maintained their good order, however, and there was no confusion.

Now and then they picked off one or another of the closely pursuing enemy, and kept on.

They were used to rapid moves, and Dick had them well in hand.

The redcoats could not follow where they led, and at length gave up the chase.

Then Dick hastened back to the grounded frigate.

He was disappointed, but not disheartened.

"Well, it was touch and go with us," he said, "and we might have succeeded. It was the narrowest sort of a miss."

"Well, at all events, we had a good try," said Phil.

They were working to get the frigate off, and the Liberty Boys now took a hand.

Wherever they could be of use there they were always to be found.

The British did not attempt to harass them, perhaps not knowing of their predicament.

The vessel was got off with a good deal of trouble, and rejoined the others.

Arnold was out of De Tilly's reach, and the wary commander, fearing to be himself blockaded, put to sea.

If they had failed on one point, however, they were to succeed on others.

They had not long been out of the bay when Dick, walking about the deck, sighted a vessel in the distance.

"That looks to me like a British forty-four," he said to a lieutenant.

The word was quickly passed.

The stranger was soon made out to be British by those whose eyes had not been as good as Dick's.

She was trying to escape, but the French ships gave chase at once.

"If we capture her," said Dick, "I will forget our other failure."

CHAPTER IX.

A PLOT THAT FAILED.

The British frigate, seeing that capture was certain, began to show fight.

"They're plucky fellows, these British sailors," said Dick.

"Yes, they're pluckier than the soldiers, I think," said Bob.

"They earn their positions, and don't buy them, as they do in the army."

"All the more credit if we get the best of them, then," with a laugh.

The British frigate had cleared her decks, and the same was now done on the French vessel.

It was Dick's good fortune to be on the leading vessel.

The fight was really between this one and the Englishman.

The forty-four was bound to make as good a fight for it as she could, despite the odds against her.

Several shots were fired, and then the two vessels came together.

Grappling irons were at once thrown out from the Frenchman.

The British tars tried to put up boarding-nets to prevent the enemy from swarming over upon their decks.

Dick quickly led a party of the Liberty Boys across, and the nettings were cut.

Then he with his party leaped upon the English quarter-deck.

The others boarded her at the waist and forward.

In a short time they were all together in a solid body. Nothing could withstand them.

The British captain was forced to give up his sword.

The French captain gallantly gave it to Dick.

"The victory is really yours, sir," he said. "Without your dashing attack it would have been a matter of time to have won the fight."

Dick was greatly pleased at this victory, for it made him forget his recent failure.

The British frigate was taken along, a crew being put on board to man her on the way back to Newport.

This victory raised the spirits of both the French allies and of the Liberty Boys.

It was not the only one that they achieved during this voyage.

On the next day they came across a couple of British privateers with their prizes.

They at once attacked them, the captured frigate being now an extra vessel of their own fleet.

The privateers quickly lowered their colors when they saw that there was no escape.

They could not run away, and they would not fight against such tremendous odds.

"We have not done so badly, after all," said Bob, "even if we did not capture Arnold."

"No," was Dick's answer, "and I am very well satisfied."

There were no more captures, and the French fleet proceeded to Newport, the commander being greatly elated.

The Liberty Boys returned to their camp, and were well received by the townspeople.

The Tories, of course, did not join in the reception that was given them.

Dick and Bob met young Wheeler in the upper town on the day following their return.

The young Tory passed them by without a word, and pretended not to see them.

Bob laughed and said:

"I suppose I ought to feel very much slighted, but I don't."

"There is no reason why he should speak to us, anyhow," said Dick. "We never met him in a friendly way."

"No, but if we were not Liberty Boys he would have recognized us, all right."

"Very true," laughed Dick.

They thought no more of the incident, for it was really very little to them whether the young Tory spoke to them or not.

The next day Dick was down at the wharves when a boy approached.

"Be you Dick Slater?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Well, Bob wants to see you bad."

"Bob Estabrook?"

"Yes, that's him. I wasn't quite sure of it."

"Where is he? What does he want to see me about?"

"He got run over by a sleigh, and he's hurt, and wants to see you."

"How did you know where to find me?"

"He said he guessed you'd be at the wharf, and I knew you was a soldier."

"Where is he, boy?"

"Come with me and I'll show you," said the messenger.

Dick hurried along at the boy's side.

Presently the boy turned down a narrow street, scarcely more than an alley.

"He's been taken here," he said, "while they went for a doctor."

"Hurry," said Dick, "we can talk about it afterward."

"This way," said the boy.

He went down the street for some distance, and knocked at a door.

A woman answered him.

"Well, have you brought his friend?"

"Yes."

"Come right in," said the woman. "He's been asking for you."

Dick was about to step inside when he saw two men at the back of the passage.

One held a rope, and the other a heavy cloak.

Dick's eyesight was very keen, and despite the gloom of the hall he saw the men.

In an instant he became suspicious.

"Hello, Bob, are you there?" he called.

"All right, Dick," said a voice which was not that of Bob Estabrook.

It was that of young Wheeler, the Tory.

Dick could not see him, as he was behind the two men.

They stepped back at this moment, so as not to be observed.

"Bob is not here," said Dick. "This is a plot to get me into the house and make me a prisoner. That was young Wheeler who spoke."

"Seize him!" Dick heard the young Tory say in whispers.

The youth sprang back into the street.

The two men leaped out, expecting to make him a prisoner.

The Liberty Boy's fist shot out, and took first one and

then the other of the two scoundrels, for such they were,

in the face.

They both went down as if they had been shot.

Then Dick walked away.

"The next time you have a plot against me," he said to

the woman, "don't manage it so clumsily."

Then he walked back to the wharf, and the first person

he met was Bob.

There was nothing the matter with him, of course.

"So you were not knocked down and run over by a sleigh,

after all?" Dick asked.

"Me?" said Bob. "No. Who told you I was, Dick?"

"Oh, a lying boy who had been sent by a clever schemer."

Then Dick related just what had happened.

"You were too clever for them that time, Dick," said Bob.

"Those scoundrels were too eager to get hold of you."

"Yes, and young Wheeler is a fool if he thinks I don't

know your voice by this time."

"Very true," agreed Bob.

The two youths went back to the camp.

The Count de Rochambeau was now about to carry out

Washington's idea, and send the whole fleet to the Chesapeake.

And in a few days Dick heard that the commander-in-

chief himself was expected shortly.

CHAPTER X.

DICK'S ESCAPE FROM THE TORIES.

It was early in March, and the weather was unsettled.

March had not come in like a lion, nor had it been lamb-like in its manner.

It was unsettled weather, and anything might be expected.

As there was little to do in camp, Dick being in hourly expectation of the commander-in-chief's arrival, the youth

decided to take a walk through the historic old town.

He went alone, Bob being busy at the time, Patsy looking

after dinner, and Carl being occupied with the horses.

It was a short walk, at a brisk pace, to the avenue, and

down one of the hill streets, to Thames street, then as now

the business street of the twin capital of Rhode Island.

Dick had little to do but to look around.

The March wind blew keen, and very few persons were

on the street.

The taverns were full, and the eating-houses had their

complement.

Dick did not care to enter either.

He never drank spirituous liquors, and he was not hungry.

The eating-houses had no more attraction for him, there-

fore, than the taverns.

He was simply out to get the air and see what was

going on.

As he walked along Thames street, he suddenly saw a

child run out into the street in front of a sleigh that came

dashing along the road.

Dick was on the alert in an instant.

At once he sprang forward.

Snatching the child from under the very feet of the

horses, he sprang back.

He saw no one who might lay claim to the child, and

looked around inquiringly.

"Where do you live, child?" he asked.

"Huh?" answered the baby, for it was not much else.

"Where do you live?"

"Main street."

Thames street was called the main street of the old town

even then.

"On Main street?"

"I dess so," said the boy.

"Yes, but where?"

"I live with father."

This was very indefinite.

At that moment a woman approached.

"Do you want to find where the child lives?" she asked.
 "Yes," was the reply. "His mother may be fretting over his absence."

"No, she's not likely. She's the sort that lets the young ones run around about as they like."

"Do you know where she lives?"

"Up the next turning, if you don't mind taking the boy back."

"Not at all," was the reply.

Dick turned up at the next street.

There he met a rough-looking man.

"The boy lives up the street, three or four doors," he growled.

Dick took the boy along, and stopped at the fourth door. Then, as he set him down, two or three men suddenly sprang out upon him.

Before he could resist or cry out, he was muffled and hurried into a house.

He was borne to the top story and put in a room with one gable window, under the roof.

He recognized one of his captors as the man who had formerly failed to secure him at the house near the wharf.

"So you are here again?" said Dick.

"Yes, and this time I shall keep you."

"Did young Wheeler send you to entrap me?"

"It does not matter who sent me," was the reply.

"Do you know who I am?"

"Yes; you are Dick Slater."

"Why do you detain me?"

"You are a rebel."

"Then you are a Tory."

"I am a king's man."

"And acting under orders of young Wheeler, the Tory."

"Never mind," was the answer. "You are my prisoner."

"For a short time," dryly.

"As long as we like," said the man.

Then he went away, locking the door and leaving Dick bound to a chair.

When he had departed Dick began to look around him.

The cords were but little hindrance.

He soon drew his hands free.

After that he could release his ankles.

Then he went to the window.

It was nailed fast.

Picking up the chair to which he had been bound, he dashed out half a dozen panes.

Then he looked out.

He was thirty feet from the ground.

There was no tree in sight.

"Nothing venture, nothing have," said Dick.

Then he climbed out of the window and made his way to the narrow ledge below.

It required a steady nerve to walk upon that narrow way.

Dick Slater was cool-headed and used to danger.

It was the same to him as if he were walking upon the broad avenue in the fashionable part of the old town.

Sure and steady he made his way around the gable.

Then he saw one of the leaders or water-pipes leading below.

It ran along the peak of the roof to the gable, over the eaves, and so to the ground.

To Dick Slater it was as good as a ladder.

He did not hesitate an instant.

Reaching it, he bent down till he reached the pipe.

Then he lowered himself over the eaves.

The pipe was fastened here and there by stout cleats.

There was no danger of its giving way.

They did good work in those old days.

Lowering himself over the ledge, Dick seized the pipe and went down foot by foot.

Suddenly he heard a shout.

His escape had been discovered.

Some one was climbing out of the window.

Then he saw a face peering over the gutter.

"Stop!" a man cried.

It was the Tory.

Dick went on his way.

"Stop or I fire!"

"You will only make the pipe leak," was the answer of the brave youth.

Crack!

A pistol shot rang out.

A bullet struck the leader not two inches from Dick's head.

The Liberty Boy glided downward.

"That will need repairing," he said with great coolness.

"I will fetch you yet!" with a growl.

Crack!

Again the pistol rang out.

The pipe was struck this time a foot from Dick's hands, which were above his head.

"You are losing your aim," he cried.

Then he glided out of reach of the man on the roof.

If the Tory had leaned over any further he would have fallen.

Dick made his way to the ground without accident.

He alighted in a little court.

Not far away was a door.

It led to the street, beyond a doubt.

Dick hurried toward it.

Just then a man came out.

"Where are you going?" he demanded.

"Back to the camp of the Liberty Boys."

"Not if I know it."

"But I do!"

Spat!

Dick's sturdy right arm flew straight out from the shoulder.

His fist struck the man right between the eyes.

He fell as if hit by a bullet.

Dick looked at him for a moment, and then made for the door.

Entering, he hurried along a dark passage which he judged led to the street.

At the further end there was a stairway leading to the floor above.

As Dick reached this a man came dashing down.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"No one who wishes to keep company with you," dryly.

The man attempted to seize the youth.

Once more Dick struck out.

The Tory, for he it was, fell in a mass at the foot of the stairs.

Then Dick hurried on toward the door.

In another moment he was in the alley.

Half an hour later he was in the camp of the Liberty Boys, relating to Bob, Mark, Jack and a dozen others how the latest plan of the Tories to entrap him had failed.

"Shure, an' Oi think yez are very impolite not to let dhim kape, yez, Dick," said Patsy.

"Would you let them keep you, Patsy?" smilingly from Dick.

"Shure, an' Oi wudn't."

"Why not?"

"Becos Oi'm not important enuff."

"Then you think that the more important a man is, the more danger he is in?"

"Shure Oi do."

"And why?"

"Shure, an' becos dhe more a man is noticed, dhe more min dhene do be to fire rocks at him."

"Very true," said Dick.

CHAPTER XI.

ONCE MORE AT SEA.

Washington arrived at Newport on March 6th, and found the fleet ready to set sail.

Dick saw him soon after his arrival, and had a short talk with him.

"Well, Dick," asked the general, "how do you like the sea?"

"Very well, your excellency," said Dick.

"I hear that you made a most daring attempt to capture Arnold a short time ago."

"Yes, your excellency, and failed by the merest chance."

"Well, it was something to make the attempt, Dick, for it shows your devotion to the cause."

The Liberty Boys were all ready to set sail, but, meantime, Phil Waters wished to have a farewell visit with Marcia Dame.

The roads were good, the air was crisp, and Phil thought that a sleigh ride would be a fine finish to his visit.

They set off, therefore, in high glee, the bells jingling, the snow crunching under the horses' hoofs, and the wind whistling about their ears.

Phil was used to horses, of course, and could easily contro. the two spirited animals attached to the sleigh.

They sped along the broad avenue in the upper town, and for a time everything went well.

Then some mischievous boys began to snowball the horses. Just how it happened Phil could never tell.

It may be that one snowball was frozen, or that it had a stone in it, but at any rate one of the horses suddenly gave a snort and took the bit in his teeth.

Then his mate became frightened, and away dashed both with the speed of the wind.

Phil had a strong grip, and he now held on firmly, at the same time speaking to the horses in soothing tones.

The animals dashed on, and it required all of Phil's strength to hold them.

He could not stop them, but he could prevent them from running away.

So long as they had a straight road before them and there was nothing in the way, there was no danger.

The horses would then simply run till they were tired out. After that it would be an easy matter to control them.

With this view of the case the ride was simply exhilarating. There was a danger to be apprehended, however.

Just now there was nothing in the way.

It was not very long, however, before a lumbering ox-sled came into the road from a by-lane.

If they got across in time, all right.

If they blocked the road, leaving no room either in front or behind, there would be a collision.

Phil shouted to the man driving the ox-team, telling him to get out of the way.

The driver either did not hear or heeded not.

He kept on, and completely blocked the road.

The two horses were going on at full speed, and Phil was simply able to hold them.

"Whoa!" he shouted, hauling upon the reins with all his might.

The wind carried the sound of his voice to the driver of the ox-team.

He lashed his patient beasts with the whip.

"Get up, there!" he shouted.

He did not see Phil, but was impatient over the slow pace of the oxen.

The clumsy beasts gave a tug, and started forward at a quick pace for them.

Phil was able to check his horses just a little.

He turned off to one side as much as possible, and dashed on.

The horses just cleared the tail of the ox-cart as they flew past.

Phil heaved a great sigh of relief.

He had escaped by a hair.

Marcia had realized the danger but, like the plucky girl she was, had said nothing.

"Whoa!" said Phil, sawing on the reins.

He succeeded in getting the animals under control in a few minutes after that, when the danger was over.

"That was a narrow chance," he said, "and you were a brave girl not to scream or grab me or do any other absurd thing."

"All girls don't yell or grab people," laughed Marcia.

"Well, a good many do, and that is why accidents happen."

"And some boys lose their heads, upset the sleigh, jump out, and do other queer things."

"Well, it's all right now, and we didn't either of us make fools of ourselves."

Phil was cautious all the rest of the way, however, and would not trust too much to the horses.

"Do you think you will come back right away this time, as you did before?" asked Marcia.

"Well, I hope not," said Phil heartily.

"How am I going to take that?" asked Marcia, smiling.

"What I meant," said Phil, with a blush, "was that we do something, and not have to come back."

"Then you don't want to?" with a mischievous look.

"Certainly, as far as you are concerned, of course, but I want the Frenchmen to do something so that we will have something to do."

"Then you'd rather fight than stay here and see me?"

"It isn't that," said Phil. "There is something to be done, and I want to help do it."

"I know," laughed Marcia, "and I must not tease you. I would not hold you back for the world, when the country needs you."

"And when the work is done I'll come back again, and—"

"What?" asked the girl teasingly.

Phil's answer was a kiss, and Marcia blushed crimson, but did not seem to be greatly offended.

The next day the vessels set sail, and Patsy was in trouble again.

"Shure, an' Oi wish dhat we cud do our foightin' on dhe land," he said. "Av dhe ships did not have to go on dhe wather it wud be all roight."

"You was nefer heard off ships dot went on der croud, did you?" asked Carl.

"Yis; we wint aground ourselves on dhe lasht v'y'ge," said Patsy.

"Yah, und dey was had to tooked her off. Dot was no blaces been for ein ship."

"Yez are roight, Cookyspiller, an' a ship on dhe wather is no place for me, be dhe same token."

If Patsy was miserable, however, Dick, Bob, Mark, Phil and the rest of the Liberty Boys were in fine spirits.

They felt that something would be done now, and they were eager to begin the fray.

It was the expectation that Arnold would try to make his escape before the fleet arrived in the Chesapeake.

The plan, therefore, was to include a descent into North Carolina, cut off the detachment of the enemy which had ascended Cape Fear River, to intercept Cornwallis if possible, and to relieve General Green and the Southern States.

The fleet set out on the evening of March 8th with a fair wind.

The British fleet under Arbuthnot started in pursuit two days later, but as the French vessels had so great a lead it was hoped that they would reach Chesapeake Bay ahead of the enemy.

On the 16th of March Admiral Arbuthnot overtook Destouches and his vessels off the capes of Virginia.

The respective forces were nearly equal, the French having more men, and the British more guns.

"Now, then," said Dick to Bob when the British vessels approached, "let us see what they will do. At any rate, whatever happens, there will be plenty of work for the Liberty Boys."

CHAPTER XII.

A HOT FIGHT OFF THE CAPES.

The fight was on between the French and British fleets. The roar of cannon, the screaming of shells, the rattle of musketry, the whistling of the wind, and the shouts of the crews made up one tremendous din.

The air was thick with smoke, and at times the vessels were completely hidden from each other.

Unless one of the enemy's ships was boarded there would be little for the Liberty Boys to do.

Dick watched his chances, therefore, holding the youths in readiness to board on the instant that they grappled.

Cannons boomed, shot and shell went shrieking through the air, and there was a perfect rain of bullets whenever any of the enemy came within range.

Both Destouches and Arbuthnot were commanders of large experience, and for a time the fortunes of war seemed to be about evenly divided.

The British van bore the brunt of battle at first, and was severely handled by the French.

Then the center came to its relief, the British sailors uttering lusty cheers.

The French line was broken by the onslaught, and more British cheers were heard.

Then the French rallied, formed their line again, and once more the din fairly shook the heavens.

Once more the cannons roared, and the screaming of shells struck terror to the hearts of the timid.

When the smoke cleared away the British were seen withdrawing.

A crippled ship was seen not far away, and one of the French frigates bore down upon it.

This was the very vessel on which were Dick Slater and the Liberty Boys.

"Stand by to board!" cried Dick, in ringing tones.

"Aye, aye!" answered Bob and all the youths.

The two vessels came together with a crash at the quarter. Grappling irons were at once thrown out, and the ships made fast.

Then over the rail swarmed Dick and the gallant youths with the agility of monkeys.

Over they went, every boy of them, while Ira Little, called the Midget, climbed the rigging to haul down the flag. A British sailor undertook to fire at him. A blow from Phil Waters stretched him out on deck. Little attention was paid to the youth for the next few minutes.

The British hoped yet to save the day and capture the French frigate.

They had courageous youths to fight against, however. It was not a hand-to-hand fight, but a vain attempt to beat back the rush of a superior force.

The Liberty Boys were simply invincible, and carried everything before them.

Some of the other ships attempted to go to the aid of the beleaguered vessel.

The French ships swarmed about her, however, and she was cut out.

Before that time, moreover, down came the colors, and the British captain had surrendered.

The Liberty Boy came sliding down the shrouds, and was received with cheers.

"Shure, an' dhere's not very much av yez, me bhy," roared Patsy, "but phwat dhere is do be all roight, ivery inch!"

"Yah," said Carl, "und off I was brave lige you was cound-ing mein size, I was a sheneral been, I bet you."

The British vessel was carried away, but others which had been crippled were rescued and kept from falling into the enemy's hands.

The British admiral did not attempt to bring on a second encounter.

Some of his ships were too badly crippled to warrant the attempt.

The French did not seek another battle, and after an engagement lasting an hour both fleets withdrew.

The victory belonged to the French, in one way, but the British claimed it.

The French were cut off from the Chesapeake, the enterprise against Portsmouth was discontinued, and Arnold was saved.

The British had, therefore, effected the main objects which they had had in view, which were the cutting off of the French from the South.

Both sides claimed the victory, and each, from its point of view, had won.

The next day, much to the disappointment of Dick and the Liberty Boys, Destouches headed once more for Newport.

"Well, me bhys," said Patsy, "Oi'm sorry we'll not have any more foighting, but Oi'm glad to get off av dhe say, begorra."

"You was off von it not alretty, Batsy," said Carl. "Maybe you was some more off it had."

"Oi don't want anny av it, me bhy. Dim Frinchmin do be good fellies, but Oi'd rather be on land."

"What you knowed off dose Vrenchmans when you couldn't spoke Vrench?"

"Go on, Cookyspiller," retorted Patsy. "Oi shpake Frinch all roight, but dhey don't."

"Dey didn't spoke Vrench what is deir own langwitch?"

"No, dhey don't, or, at any rate, dhey don't shpake it dhe same as Oi do, an' dhat's dhe same t'ing, begorra."

"Und dey was been bedder sailors as you, too, ain't it?"

"Betther sailors. is it? Thru'e for yez, me bhy, an' dhey are welkim to be."

"Yah, und dey was bedder cooks as you was also, ain't it?" Here was where Patsy's pride was touched.

He was quite willing to acknowledge that his French allies were better sailors.

He was not a sailor at all, and did not like the sea, which he would be glad to leave.

When it came to cooking, however, he would not yield the palm to any one.

Carl knew this, and wanted to tease the good-natured young Irishman.

"Betther cooks, is it?" he said, with a snort. "No, sor, dhey are not betther cooks."

"For why was dhe been not bedder coogs?" asked the fat German.

"Becos dhey're not, an' dhat's raison enuff, Cookyspiller."

"Dot was been der reason off ein womans, und dot vas nodings."

"Go on wid yez, Dootchy. Shure, an' Oi'll show yez phwy dhey are not betther cooks."

"Vell, go aheadt."

"Av a Frinchman wants to make a pot av soup phwat does he do, me bhy?"

"What you dooded?"

"Oi make soup dhat yez can tashte, an' dhat'll shtick to yez, dhat's phwat I do."

"And what der Vrenchman done alretty, Batsy?" asked Carl, the others listening.

"Phwat does he do? Phwy, he takes an inyun an' a bone widout any mate on it, puts dhim in a barrel av wather, biles dhim down, let's an owld hin floi over dhe galley, an' dhin he calls it soup!"

The youths laughed, and Bob said:

"I am afraid that you have been on such a slim diet, an account of your seasickness, Patsy, that you have been missing the fine living the rest of us have been getting."

"No, Bob, me bhy, Oi have missed nothin' at all, at all. Oi know how dhe Frinch do cook, for Oi've seen dhim in Newport; an' Oi've no use for dheir patty-de-four grasses or dhim other things wid funny names to dhim."

"You was chealous, dot was what der madder was," said Carl. "You know you gould coog lige a Vrenchman not so goot, und—"

"Phwat's dhat out dhere on dhe wather, me bhy?" asked Patsy, suddenly pointing out to sea.

Carl arose and turned to look, when Patsy substituted a deck tub half full of water for his stool.

"I was saw nodings," said Carl.

"No, nayther do Oi. Sit down, me bhy."

In a moment Carl was floundering in the water, his hands and feet flying.

"Dhere yez are, in a pot av yer fine Frinch soup," roared Patsy. "How do yez loike it, me bhy? If yez say it's betther dhan dhe fine shtuff Oi give yez Oi'll make yez swally dhe whole av it," and Patsy won his point.

CHAPTER XIII.

A MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE.

When the Liberty Boys returned to Newport, Phil Waters went to see Marcia Dame.

He met her mother at the door, and saw that she seemed visibly affected by some sorrow.

"Is Marcia at home, Mrs. Dame?" he asked.

"No, she is not, and I do not know where she is."

"What do you mean?" asked Phil in surprise.

"Don't you know where she is?"

"I?" said Phil. "No, indeed. We have just returned with the French fleet. The campaign was shorter than we had supposed it would be."

"And you have not seen Marcia?"

"No, indeed. How should I? As I told you, we have only just arrived. We are scarcely in camp yet."

"Then why did you send word that you and my daughter were going away to be married?"

"I?" said Phil, in the greatest surprise. "I never sent any such message."

The old lady looked at the youth intently, and said:

"Tell me the truth, Phil. Don't you really know where Marcia is?"

"Indeed, I do not; Mrs. Dame," was Phil's answer. "I am as much in the dark as you are."

"And you sent me no such letter?"

"I could not, madam. We have only arrived to-day, as I told you."

"Come in. Perhaps you can help me. This affair has nearly prostrated me."

Phil entered the attractive sitting-room, where a cheerful fire was blazing on the hearth.

Mrs. Dame went to the secretary and took out a letter, which she handed to the youth.

He looked it over and said:

"Mrs. Dame, I assure you that I never wrote this missive. It is a forgery."

"Then Marcia must have been spirited away."

"When did she disappear?"

"Yesterday. She often goes to her aunt's at the other end of the island."

"And you did not worry when she did not return?"

"No, although she did not tell me that she was going to my sister's."

"And this letter?" asked Phil, pondering.

"Came to-day, delivered by a negro boy."

"It is a forgery, Mrs. Dame. I never wrote it. Whoever did knew of our return to-day."

"Then where can the poor child be?" asked the distressed mother.

"She has been spirited away, no doubt, as you suggested."

"But, my dear boy, how are we going to find her?"

"I can't tell you at this moment, Mrs. Dame. I shall have to see Dick. His advice will be good. You believe me now?"

"Yes, I believe that you had nothing to do with it. But where is my poor child?"

"We will find her, Mrs. Dame," said Phil. "Never fear. I will go and see Dick at once."

"Do so, and tell me what he says. If you need money or any other assistance, let me know."

"No, the Liberty Boys will be enough, Mrs. Dame. I will keep you advised of everything that we do."

Then Phil hurried off post-haste to the camp of the Liberty Boys.

He found Dick shortly, and related what had occurred.

"What do you think about it, Phil?" asked Dick.

"That somebody has abducted the girl, perhaps for the sake of getting money from her mother."

"Perhaps he is in love with her, Phil," said Dick, after a pause.

"Then why did he not come out honest and tell her so, instead of carrying her off?"

Dick smiled.

"He may have known that she would refuse him, and has taken this course instead," he said.

"Then you think that some man has done this?"

"Beyond a doubt."

"You do not think that she has gone off willingly and then sent this letter to deceive her mother?"

"Do you, Phil?" asked Dick.

"No, I don't!" positively. "I wanted to look at the case on all sides."

"She has been carried off, Phil, and this letter was written to deceive her mother. We must try and learn who wrote it."

"I know I did not," said Phil, "but I don't see how I am going to find out who did it."

"All that we can do just now is to guess and work out a theory that way."

"Make a guess as to the author of the forgery, you mean, Dick?"

"Yes," was the youth's answer.

"But I have no ideas about it whatever, and so cannot guess. I don't know of any one who would do this."

Just then Bob Estabrook came into the tent.

Dick told him what they had been talking about and then asked:

"What is your idea of it, Bob?"

"I think that that young Tory, Wheeler, I mean, is at the bottom of it."

"Say you so?" said Phil.

"Yes. He hates you and me and Dick and the Liberty Boys, and would do us all the hurt he could."

"But how do you know he is in love with Marcia?" asked Phil.

"He may not be; he may be simply working against us. Still, I have an idea that he has taken a fancy to her."

"What do you think, Dick?" asked Phil, for Dick had not said a word.

"I think with Bob that he is at the bottom of this, and I always have thought so."

"Then how are we going to ascertain the truth?"

"His sisters are pretty nice girls, aren't they?" asked Bob.

"Yes, I have met them once or twice."

"Then you know them well enough to call upon them?"

"Oh, yes."

"We must go there, quite carelessly, as it might be, and then find out if the brother is at home."

"And then?"

"Follow him. We must not let him know that we suspect him, but we must watch his every movement."

"But won't the girls think it strange that I should go there to call without Marcia?" asked Phil.

"Oh, we only want you to introduce us to the girls. You don't have to call after that. In fact, it will be as well for you to stay away after the first call."

"Well, I will do it. We can go at once if you like."

The three set off on their horses in a short time, and rode to the Wheeler mansion, where the girls received them very cordially.

"How is Marcia?" asked one. "I have not seen her for a day or so. Isn't she well?"

"Oh, yes," said Phil, carelessly. "If you'll excuse me I'll run next door."

The two girls were really very nice young persons, as Marcia had said, and entertained Dick and Bob delightfully.

In the midst of the call, very much to the surprise of the youths, in walked the brother of the girls, and seemed greatly surprised.

CHAPTER XIV.

A STRANGE DECLARATION.

"Have you met Captain Slater and Lieutenant Estabrook Tom?" asked Adele, the eldest of the young ladies.

"I believe I have seen them," said young Wheeler, distantly.

The youths bowed, and the conversation proceeded, Tom Wheeler taking little part in it, however.

Both Dick and Bob talked upon a variety of subjects, never once alluding to Marcia Dame nor to the war.

The young ladies considered them delightful companions, and were most vivacious.

They had the tact not to allude to national questions, and the time passed very pleasantly.

Dick watched the young Tory very closely, without seeming to do so, and now and then addressed a casual remark to him.

Tom had very little to say, however, and in a short time he went out.

He had been ill at ease all the time he had been in the room, as Dick could plainly see.

When he went out Dick turned to Bob pretty soon, and said:

"Won't you go to the camp, Bob, and see if the supplies have come?"

"Certainly," said Bob, "but he knew as well as if Dick had told him that his mission was quite a different one."

He was to follow young Wheeler, see where he went, and note anything suspicious about his conduct.

The young Tory would know him, of course, but Bob knew how to follow a person without being seen.

He noticed the fresh prints in the snow, and knew that Wheeler had made them.

Then he saw the young fellow turn down the hill, and immediately he began to be cautious.

He took another street leading to Thames street, and rode on at a rapid gait, soon entering the main thoroughfare of the lower town.

His move had been a wise one, for shortly after reaching Thames street he saw Wheeler coming toward him.

He dashed up a narrow street, and the young man passed without seeing him.

Then Bob came out and followed.

Wheeler walked toward the wharves and turned up a narrow street.

Bob watched him, saw him go into a house, and took note of it.

He wished to be able to remember it.

"That's where he's taken the girl," thought Bob. "He wouldn't have any business in a common place like that if there wasn't something wrong about it."

Bob watched the house for some time, and did not see Wheeler come out of it.

"It's all right," was Bob's thought. "There's no need in watching for him. Now to see Dick."

He started back toward the upper town, and met Dick on the hill.

"I thought you might be down this way," said the youth.

"I have located him," was Bob's reply.

"Say you so?"

"Yes; I'll show you the place."

Then Bob went back, with Dick at his side.

He pointed out the house to Dick, who smiled and said:

"Yes, that's the house where you were taken when you were knocked down by the sleigh."

"Is that so?" laughed Bob. "It is strange that I should not have remembered it."

"Not so strange, after all, when you were never there."

"What will you do, Dick? Don't you think that Marcia is there?"

"I think it is very likely."

"Then why not go there and demand that she be given up?"

"She may not be there."

"But you think that it is very likely?"
 "Yes; but we must be sure of it."
 "Very true," agreed Bob.
 "Stay here a moment," said Dick.
 "Then he jumped off his horse and walked up the narrow street to a house almost opposite the one Wheeler had entered.
 Dick knocked at the door.
 A sour-faced woman answered his call.
 "Have you any rooms for rent?" the youth asked.
 "Not for soldiers," the woman snapped, for Dick was in uniform.
 "Why not?"
 "Because they never pay."
 "But I will pay you," and the youth displayed some money.
 "Soldiers always drink and make a noise," continued the woman.
 "I do not drink, nor do I make a noise."
 "Well, you are a rebel, and I won't have you in my house."
 Dick was watching the house opposite all the time he was talking to the woman.
 It was situated so that he could do it and yet look at the woman.
 "Well, I don't think I want to come here, anyhow," the youth answered.
 At that moment he had caught sight of some one at an upper window of the house opposite.
 It was a young girl, and he was almost certain that it was Marcia.
 "My house is as good as any house on the street," the woman declared.
 "No, I think I prefer the one opposite."
 "That's dirty and the people drink and are noisy. You had better come here."
 "No, I prefer the other."
 The young girl came closer to the window at this moment, and Dick was certain now.
 It was Marcia beyond a doubt.
 She saw him, and then stepped back out of sight.
 "I guess I'll go over there," said Dick, stepping back.
 The woman now began to offer inducements to the youth to take one of her rooms.
 She praised them most extravagantly, and offered them at a low price.
 There was no need of the youth's taking one now, for he knew that Marcia was in the other house.
 He beckoned to Bob, and then, as the youth came up, after tethering the two horses knocked at the door of the other house.
 The same woman he had seen before came to the door.
 "What do you want?" she snapped.
 "There is a young lady a prisoner in this house against her will," said Dick, "and we want that she shall be released."
 "There's no one kept prisoner in this house."
 "But I know there is, because I saw her at the window."
 "I tell you there isn't any one here," said the woman, trying to close the door.
 "And I tell you that there is," said Dick. "Come on, Bob."
 He pushed the woman aside and, followed by Bob, dashed upstairs.
 On the top floor he tried two or three doors and found them all locked.
 "She was in front, so this must be the door," he said.
 Then he threw herself against it and burst it open.
 Marcia Dame was at the window.
 "Come," said Dick, "we have come to save you. Fortunately we found out where you were with little trouble."
 Marcia drew back, and said haughtily:
 "I desire to have nothing to do with any of the Liberty Boys because they are all in the plot against me."
 Dick was thunderstruck.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MYSTERY CLEARED.

Both Dick and Bob looked greatly astonished at the girl's declaration.
 "What do you mean?" asked Dick. "I do not understand you."
 "It is plain enough," said the girl coldly.
 "It is certainly plain that you are laboring under a grave misapprehension," said Dick.

"Not at all. I understand your plot, and I am not deceived by it. You will please leave this room at once."
 "Excuse me if I do not," said Dick. "You have accused us of being in a plot against you."
 "And so you are!"
 "What is the plot?"
 "I was to be brought here and then you were to rescue me, and Mr. Phil Waters was to be declared a hero and marry me forthwith."
 Dick laughed.
 "It happens that Phil does not know that you are here," he said.
 "Nor does he know this place," added Bob.
 "And you were also supposed to have eloped with him. In fact some one seems to have been telling a lot of queer stories."
 "Have you seen Mr. Tom Wheeler?" asked Bob. "He might explain something."
 "Jove! we forgot him," said Dick. "I wonder if he has taken the alarm and made his escape?"
 "I presume he has."
 "Well, let him go. Now, Miss Dame, please tell us how you conceived the idea that the Liberty Boys were in a plot against you."
 "You'd better tell her how we knew she was here, Dick," said Bob. "Tell her the whole story."
 Dick did so.
 Marcia seemed greatly astonished at the recital, and said:
 "That is entirely different from what I had supposed to be the case."
 "Who told you that we were in a plot against you?"
 "I heard the people of the house talking about it."
 "And they said?"
 "That the Liberty Boys had carried me off and were going to make a pretended rescue, with Phil Waters at the head, and that then he would marry me."
 Both Dick and Bob laughed heartily.
 "You overheard them saying this?" they both asked.
 "Yes."
 "They meant that you should overhear it. There was to be another pretended rescue, I do not doubt," said Dick.
 "What do you mean?"
 "That Mr. Tom Wheeler was going to rescue you. You would be disgusted at Phil's duplicity and marry Tom as soon as he asked you."
 "Do you think that was the plot?" asked Marcia.
 "I haven't the slightest doubt about it," was Dick's answer.
 "Bob followed the man here. You have not seen him?"
 "No."
 "How did you get here?"
 "Some one told me in the street that Phil had hurt himself, and that—"
 "And then you followed the messenger here and were detained?"
 "Yes; but how did you know it?"
 Dick laughed.
 "Because that is the way these people go to work," he said. "They tried to play the same trick on me, but I detected it in time."
 "And you don't believe now that the Liberty Boys are such terrible villains, do you?" asked Bob.
 "No, I do not."
 "Come, then," said Dick, "and we will leave this place."
 Marcia took her hat and wraps from a sofa, and they left the room.
 In the passage outside they met two rough-looking men, one of whom said:
 "You can't leave this place till you give us fifty pounds."
 "And you may consider yourself fortunate that it is not a hundred," said the other.
 "Come, Bob!" said Dick, suddenly.
 The two Liberty Boys made a sudden dash.
 One of the men was seized and thrown over the balustrade. He went clattering down the stairs with a terrible noise.
 The other man, fearing to receive a similar treatment, fled in haste.
 Then Dick went forward, pistols in hand, Bob and Marcia following.
 The man who had been thrown downstairs picked himself up and fled to a room on the second floor.
 The Liberty Boys were not further molested, and quickly left the house.
 The woman who had answered the door was not to be seen, nor was the young Tory.

To abduct a person was a grave offence at that time, and the people in the house evidently realized it.

Dick, Bob, and a number of the Liberty Boys went there the next day with a constable.

They found the house empty, and the tenants flown.

Meantime Dick and Bob had obtained a sleigh and a pair of horses, and had driven Marcia to her home.

Phil was there, and was overjoyed to see her.

He was disappointed at not having aided in her rescue, but Dick told him that under the circumstances it was just as well that he had not been.

"It would have looked like a prearranged affair if you had been with us, Phil," said Dick.

"Which was just what these people wanted Marcia to think we were getting up," said Bob.

"Then you think that Wheeler was going to make a pre-empted rescue, and rely on Marcia's gratitude?"

"Yes, precisely so; but it is not likely now that he will be seen again while we are about."

"But his sisters are such nice girls that it does not seem possible that he can be so contemptible."

"We have seen other evidences of it, however," said Dick.

"Yes, this is not the first time he has shown himself in his true colors," added Bob.

The next day Dick and Bob were in the eating-house on Thames street, where they had seen the young Tory enter on the evening that they had overheard the plan to release the British prisoners.

There were a number of curtained stalls in the place, and Dick and Bob entered one of these.

They were waiting for their dinner to be served when two persons entered the alcove next to theirs.

"Yes, I pretty nearly succeeded," some one said, "but those meddling Liberty Boys had to appear."

"That was too bad."

"Yes, and I had everything arranged. I was going to rescue her that very day. They were the last persons I expected to see."

"The Liberty Boys are always on hand when they are needed, aren't they, Bob?" asked Dick, in a loud tone.

"Yes; and this is not the first time we have outwitted the Tories, either."

There was the sound of hurried footsteps, and, parting the curtains, the youths saw young Wheeler making a hasty exit.

As long as they remained in Newport they saw no more of him.

CHAPTER XVI.

PATSY'S DINNER.

The Liberty Boys were still in Newport awaiting the action of Rochambeau.

The winter was about over, and the weather soon promised to be fine.

The stay of the youths depended upon what Rochambeau did, however, and Dick was anxiously awaiting orders.

Some of the Liberty Boys did not like this inactivity, and Patsy was among this number.

"Phwat do yez say, Cookyspiller, me bhy," he said one afternoon, "to goin' into the town an' seein' dhe soights?"

"Dot was all righd," said Carl. "Dot was fery shlow doodings nodings."

"Come on, dhin, an' we'll have a foine dinner, an' dhin make a call on dhe ladies."

"You was knowed dose womans, Batsy?"

"Shure, an' Oi do. Oi met foive or six foine girruls dhe odher day, an' we'll go an' call on dhim."

"Where dey was life?"

"Up in dhe town, av coorse. Shure, an' Oi'll foind dhim, me bhy."

"All righd, I went mit you."

They set out, reached the town, and went into an eating-house.

"Shure, an' I do hear dhat dhey have foine clams here," said Patsy.

"Yah, I dinks so meinselluf. Was you eated dem?"

"No, but Oi think Oi'll thry some. Give me some clams, me man," to the waiter.

"How will you have them—raw, roasted, fried, boiled, or in a chowder?"

"Shure, an' Oi don't know. How do yez ate dhim yersilf?"

"Oh, I like them steamed myself."

"Dhin dhat's all roight. Oi'll take dhim shteamed."

"Yah, und I was tooked dem dot-way also," said Carl.

"How many—a couple of dozen?" asked the waiter.

"Yis, Oi think so. How many do yez ate yersilf?"

"Oh, I generally take two or three dozen."

"All roight; fetch dhem on."

"Hard ones, I suppose?"

"Well, don't make dhim too hard, or Oi'll not be able to ate dhim."

The man went away, and in the course of five minutes returned with a big earthen bowl, which he put on the table.

He also brought a cup of melted butter and some bread.

Patsy looked at the clams, which were in their shells, gaping open from having been steamed.

"Phwat's dhim?" he asked.

"Clams."

"An' do Oi ate the whole av dhim, me bhy?"

"Certainly. Dip them in the melted butter and put on a little salt and vinegar."

"All roight, me man," and Patsy took a clam, shell and all.

"Begorrah, but it do be hot!" he cried.

Next he put the whole clam in the butter.

Next he tried to eat it.

"Begorrah, but dhim clams do be hard," he said.

Carl was waiting to see how Patsy got along before doing anything.

"Oh, but you don't eat the shells," said the man.

"An' phwat do I do wid dhim?"

"Why, you throw them away, of course."

"Afther Oi've paid for dhim? Shure, an' dhat's a washte besoides bein' extorshin."

"Here, let me show you."

The waiter took a clam on the end of the fork, dipped it in butter, and ate it.

"That's the way," he said, and ate another.

Then Carl started in on his mess of clams.

"You see, it's easy enough," and the waiter continued to eat Patsy's clams.

"Yis, Oi see it is; but Oi think Oi've seen yez do it enough to know how to do it mesilf."

"Clams are easy enough to eat when you know how," continued the man.

"Yis, I see how yez do it, but Oi want to thry mesilf."

But the man continued to show Patsy how it should be done until he had eaten a dozen.

"Here, here, Oi'm not payin' you to show me how to ate," cried Patsy, seizing the fork. "Yez can have dhe shells an' Oi'll ate dhe insoides."

Then the waiter turned to Carl and asked:

"Don't you want me to show you how to eat them? We always look out for strangers."

"Nein, I was knowed how to eat dem meinselluf. Nefer mind aboud looging ould for strangers."

"No; Oi think yez do be lukin out for yerself forst av all," said Patsy.

"You gould eated dem shells off you was wanted to show me how. Dot was gost you nodings."

The waiter grinned, and went away.

"Shure, an' Oi don't think Oi care for dhim," said Patsy.

"Vor why you don'd lige dem, Batsy?"

"Well, it sames to me as av Oi wor chewin' on leadher, an' Oi'm not so hungry as all dhat."

"Vell, I don'd tough dey was so fery goot been meinselluf, but off we was bay vor dem we was bedder eated dem, ain't it?"

"Shure, an' dhere's no savin' in dhat, Cookyspiller, av it's goin' to kill us."

"Dose clams don't was gill us, is it, Batsy?" asked Carl.

"Well, Oi think now dhat Oi mought jusht as well have let dhe man ate dhim, for Oi can't."

Then Patsy called the man and said:

"Av dhim is hard clams, dhey're too hard. Bring me some soft wans."

"Not the season for them, sir," was the reply.

"Oh, isn't it? Well, dhin, bring me a bit av froid bacon an' some potatoes. Shure, dhere's more nourishment in dhat dhan dhere is in a whole garden av clams."

"Clams don't grow in the garden, sir."

"Dhey don't?"

"No. They come out of the ocean."

"Shure, an' now Oi know phwat makes dhe say so salt. Well, take dhim away, an' bring me someting Oi can ate."

"Yah, und brought me dot also. I was had nodings to eated alretty."

The waiter looked at the shells in front of Carl, and had a different opinion.

When it came to paying for the dinner Patsy wanted the cost of the shells deducted.

"Shure, an' yez have a roight not to charge me for phwat Oi can't ate," he said.

"But we can't serve steamed clams without the shells."

"An' do yez fry dhim, too, me man?"

"Oh, no; you don't get the shells with fried clams."

"Dhin phwy didn't Oi take dhim froid? Well, av dhey wor any worse nor dhe wans Oi ate, Oi'm glad Oi didn't take dhim."

"Why, the clams were very good, sir," said the man.

"Well, mebbey yez wor hungry, but Oi think Oi'll have to be shtarved before Oi'll want dhim again."

Then they left the eating-house, but before they could find the girls that Patsy knew they met Phil Waters, who said:

"The French fleet is blockaded again, and there is no knowing when it will be relieved."

"Shure, an' dhat's too bad."

"Yes; but you must come back to camp, for we shall leave for the South to-night."

CHAPTER XVII.

ALMOST A CAPTURE.

Rochambeau, De Grasse, Washington, and the allied land and naval forces were in Virginia.

The Liberty Boys had been doing valiant work, and were now ready to fight Cornwallis.

They had harassed him in other parts of the country, and were ready to do so again.

When Rochambeau arrived Dick presented himself and said:

"Count, the Liberty Boys are at your service again."

"Thank you, Captain Slater," said Rochambeau. "I do not doubt that we will all have something to do shortly."

The two armies had not been together very much of late, but now, as the count had said, there was likely to be enough work for all.

They were advancing upon Cornwallis, now at Yorktown.

The armies were in camp, and Dick had ridden ahead to reconnoiter.

Bob, Phil, and some of the Liberty Boys had gone off in another direction.

Dick was riding along with his eyes and ears open when he suddenly heard a suspicious sound.

Some one was coming along the road.

It might be a friend, but it might also be an enemy.

It was necessary to learn which it was at once.

Dick had taught his horse to kneel at a certain signal.

He now gave the animal the signal, and he went down upon his knees behind a big clump of bushes.

Dick promptly got off his back, and lay beside him.

Then, peering through the bushes, he saw a scouting party approaching.

They were redcoats.

What was the youth's surprise to see among the number young Tom Wheeler, whom he had last seen in Newport.

"So, the young Tory has at last gone to where his sympathies lie, has he?" was his thought.

The young Tory was in the uniform of a sergeant, and rode just behind a lieutenant who led the party.

"Well, even a sergeant is better than nothing," thought Dick.

The young man's tendencies had always been toward the British.

It was not strange, therefore, that he should have gone into the army.

Dick lay flat on the ground behind the bushes, and the party passed.

"If I could get around them I might capture them, he thought.

There was little chance of doing this, however, and he lay still.

When the sound of the hoofbeats died out he arose cautiously and listened.

The party was between him and the American lines, and might return at any moment.

Dick rode ahead cautiously, thinking that there might be a by-road which he could take back to the camp.

He found one pretty soon, and rode on at an easy canter for a few minutes.

Then all at once the same party he had seen before dashed around a turn in the road.

Dick quickly wheeled his horse, and clapped spurs to his side.

Away flew the gallant animal, with Dick on his back.

Then from the front there suddenly came another party of redcoats.

Dick was between two fires.

He could not dash across country, for there were morasses to be passed, and it would be bad enough had he been on foot.

He could not hope to break through the line, either.

The road was narrow, and the party in front quickly formed in a semi-circle to cut him off.

Seeing that escape was impossible, Dick reined in his horse.

Then the two parties came together.

Young Wheeler recognized the Liberty Boy in an instant.

"This time it is my turn, Dick Slater," he cried.

"Is this Dick Slater, the rebel?" asked the lieutenant.

"Yes."

"There is a reward offered for him, dead or alive."

"There may be, but revenge is sweeter to me than any reward can be."

"Perhaps so, but I am looking for the money."

"You can have it after I get through with him," said Wheeler.

"What do you mean?"

"That I am going to kill him. You can get your reward for his dead body."

"You forget, sergeant, that I am your superior officer."

The young Tory bit his lip in vexation.

"Perhaps you are," he said, "but I want my revenge."

"What do you propose to do?"

"Kill him," savagely.

"But he is a prisoner of war. I cannot allow it."

"I'll give you the reward you expect to get for him if you will turn him over to me."

"I cannot do it."

Dick listened to this conversation unmoved.

At length he said:

"Well, lieutenant, since you are in command, may I ask what are your intentions?"

"You are Dick Slater?"

"I am."

"And a rebel?"

"I am an officer in the Continental army," proudly. "We do not recognize the other term."

"You are a rebel just the same."

"And you are an invader, a meddler, and have no business in the country."

The officer reddened.

"I follow the orders of my king," he said.

"An arrogant tyrant, pig-headed and obstinate. I stand up for the right!"

"The king is right."

"He is wrong, and every civilized power except Great Britain holds the same opinion."

"That is neither here nor there," said the officer, reddening. "You are my prisoner."

"Exactly. What are you going to do with me?"

"Take you to our camp. If you will make no effort to escape you may retain your weapons."

"If you do you will be shot dead," said Wheeler, "so bear that in mind."

"You are only second fiddle here, Wheeler," said Dick contemptuously.

The young Tory struck a savage blow at Dick.

The youth quickly parried it, and struck the Tory a blow on the chest.

It unseated him, and he rolled on the ground stunned.

In an instant there was great confusion among the little troop.

And at that moment Dick heard the tramp of horses, and saw Bob and some of the Liberty Boys dashing down the road.

He at once broke through the line, and galloped toward them.

He lay along Major's neck, and at the next instant a bullet passed over his head.

"Forward, Liberty Boys!" he cried, as he suddenly wheeled.

The redcoats quickly turned and fled, Tom Wheeler leaping into the saddle and bringing up the rear.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN THE WATER CAVE.

"You came up in good time, Bob," said Dick, as the redcoats disappeared.

"So I see. How did it happen?"

"I was caught between two scouting parties. There was a difference of opinion as to what should be done with me."

"What do you mean?"

Dick explained.

"And then you picked a quarrel with Wheeler so as to make confusion?"

"No, it happened so, that was all."

As there might be other parties abroad, Dick and the others returned to the camp at once.

"So Tom Wheeler is in the British army, is he?" said Bob.

"I suppose he had to do something for his king."

"Yes, and I wonder that he got even as high as a sergeant."

When Phil heard that Tom Wheeler was a cavalry sergeant he said:

"Well, they must have been hard up for men to take him, that's all I can say."

The next day Dick was out on foot alone, trying to learn something about the enemy's position.

He was not in uniform, and looked like an ordinary farmhand.

He had located the enemy's lines, and was making his way back to the camp when he suddenly saw a number of horsemen approaching.

He saw that they were redcoats, but hoped to get by without trouble.

He could assume a simple, almost foolish manner when he chose.

This had often deceived those who had captured him.

The men quickly surrounded him, and one of them asked:

"Where are you going, boy?"

"Oh, just 'long th' road a piece," said Dick.

"Where have you been?"

"Been lookin' arter snakes."

"Catch anything?"

"No, I haint; but I reckon I will right soon."

"Seen any rebel soldiers?"

"I hain't. Be you some?"

The man laughed, and said:

"He's a fool. There's nothing to fear in that quarter."

The others laughed, and were about to let Dick pass.

At that moment a newcomer arrived.

The instant he saw the supposed country boy he shouted:

"Don't let that fellow escape. He's a rebel."

The newcomer was Tom Wheeler, the Tory sergeant.

Dick attempted to draw his pistols, without which he never traveled.

The men were too quick for him, however:

He was seized and held in a firm grasp by three of the men.

Dick was hurried away, and presently reached a small opening in a ledge of rock about large enough for a man to enter on his hands and knees.

Dick was carried along this passage for about six feet, when he was able to stand up, but no more.

A tumbling stream ran through the place, and the men had been obliged to wade through it in entering.

Behind him somewhere he heard the sound of falling water.

Light entered the place through fissures overhead.

When his eyes became accustomed to the gloom Dick saw that there was a waterfall about twenty feet behind him.

An underground stream emptied itself over rocks into this narrow cave, and flowed out at the place where he had entered.

The place was just as high as his head, and not more than ten feet wide anywhere.

"Tie him and put a stone on the cords," said Tom Wheeler.

Dick was bound hand and foot, and laid on the rocks alongside the water.

Then heavy stones were placed upon the ends of the cords which prevented his releasing himself.

"Let him stay here and drown," said Wheeler. "We'll soon fix him."

Then they all crawled out of the cavern.

Pretty soon Dick heard a splash, and then another.

Then it seemed as if the light at the entrance were being cut off.

Then there came a sound as of a stone falling.

The youth quickly realized what was being done.

They were closing up the entrance to the water cave.

The stream, having no chance to escape, would in time fill the place.

Pretty soon the only light that entered the place came in at the top.

Dick could hear the water surging at his feet, and pretty soon he felt it on his ankles.

The opening had no doubt been closed with earth as well as stones, so as to let the water escape.

It was backing up faster than it ran out, in fact.

He could feel it growing higher and higher.

He tugged at his wrists, and at last succeeded in pulling the cords from under the stone that held them.

He was thus enabled to sit up, which was a slight improvement in his situation.

If he could release his feet it would be still better.

He tugged at them and finally dragged them loose.

The next thing to do was to loosen his bonds.

He tugged at his wrists, but only eased the cords, without being able to slip his hands through them.

Then, lying down, he put his legs through his arms, bringing his hands in front of him.

He was very supple, and accomplished this feat after one or two trials.

Then he put his wrists to his mouth, and worked on the cords with his teeth.

By alternately working his wrists and using his teeth, he at last loosened the cords enough to slip out one hand.

Then he used both, and drawing the cords across the sharp edge of a rock, cut them.

Then he reached down and soon had his ankles free, and stood up, finding that the water had overflowed its bed.

CHAPTER XIX.

A WONDERFUL ESCAPE.

The water was rising rapidly, and Dick went to where the opening was less than waist high, and examined it.

Here the stream half filled the passage.

"There is little chance of working at that end," he thought.

He walked back to the base of the fall and looked up.

The top of the cave was quite a little higher at this point.

The fall was sheer, and the basin below had been worn quite deep.

There was a shelf of rock at one side wide enough for him to stand upon.

As he stood on the shelf he suddenly passed his hand along the cliff back of the water.

There was quite a space between the rock and the fall.

Then it suddenly occurred to him that the cave might extend back of the fall unknown to his captors.

He passed behind the fall without getting wet, and groped along in the darkness.

Feeling along the wall with his hands, he quickly discovered that he was not passing under the fall to the other side, but walking in a passage back of the water.

"Just as I thought," he said. "Now, the question is, how far does this extend, and is there an opening to the air outside?"

The youth now knew from his sense of direction that he was not proceeding in a straight line back from the fall.

The passage turned at a wide angle, and later there was a much sharper one.

"This place has been worn by water in the first place," he thought, "but the lower stream has been deflected, and only the upper one runs."

It was pitch dark in the place, and he had only the sense of touch to guide him.

Dick determined to push on and trust in Providence.

As he groped along he became aware that the passage ascended, and also that it grew wider.

He determined this latter fact from the lighter quality of the air.

Before his breath had been reflected, as it were, from the opposite wall.

Now it was not so, and he knew that the cavern had widened.

There were wonderful caves in Virginia, he knew, and this was one of them.

The men who had discovered this one had had no idea of its extent.

Neither had Dick, nor did he care to explore it, his main object being to get out.

He followed the wall, and at the same time felt with his feet to watch for possible pitfalls.

All of the youth's senses were unusually keen, and they now stood him in good stead.

Pretty soon he became aware of a gleam ahead of him.

It was not a light, exactly, but a lessening of the thick darkness all about.

It was not like the change from the darkest hour of the night to the first gray streaks of the dawn.

As he walked on, still ascending, he could actually say that he saw the light.

It was faint at first, but slowly increased in brilliancy.

Then it grew brighter, and at last, as he still went up, he suddenly turned a sharp angle and saw the bright sunlight pouring into a circular basin in the earth.

He was in a ravine, the sides of which were steep at most points.

At one side, however, there was a gradual ascent, which went by zig-zags to the ground above.

It was worn hard by the feet of bears and other wild animals, and Dick had no trouble in following it.

He made his way to the top, and came out in a thick wood, while only the sun overhead could give him the least guide as to the way back to the camp.

CHAPTER XX.

CONCLUSION.

Dick sat down upon a moss-covered stone, and pondered.

There had been a path down to the ravine, and there might be one through the woods.

Then a sudden thought struck him.

The path down into the ravine had been made some time before.

No wild animals used it at the present time.

The path through the woods had grown over, therefore.

Dick climbed a tree and located the camp in the distance.

Then he came down and set off through the woods in the proper direction.

He reached it in an hour, and related his adventures.

Bob was very much excited, and said:

"Well, if we ever get hold of Mr. Tom Wheeler we'll do more than shut him up in a cave."

Later that day they went to the mouth of the little cave and pried away the stones at the opening.

The water burst out in a perfect flood.

It tore a path for itself, and went off alongside the road in a regular torrent.

They saw nothing of Wheeler or of any of the scouting party, and pushed on at night.

In a few days the siege of Yorktown began.

It ended in the capitulation of Cornwallis and the surrender of the troops.

Among the prisoners was Tom Wheeler.

It chanced that he saw Dick at the head of the Liberty Boys.

He turned white in an instant, and seemed ready to faint.

Dick said nothing, and he passed on.

What became of him later no one ever knew.

After the fall of Yorktown Dick and the Liberty Boys joined Washington's forces.

At the close of the war Phil Waters went to Newport.

Shortly afterward he was married to Marcia Dame.

Tom Wheeler did not return, and Phil never heard from him.

Dick parted cordially with the Count Rochambeau after the battle, and expressed the hope that they would meet again.

Rochambeau expressed the same sentiments.

"I can but believe in a glorious future for the country," he said, "when its youths are so devoted."

The Liberty Boys saluted, and gave him a rousing cheer, and then they parted.

Soon afterward they joined Washington, where new achievements were to be performed by them.

Next week's issue will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS AT STATEN ISLAND; OR, SPYING UPON THE BRITISH."

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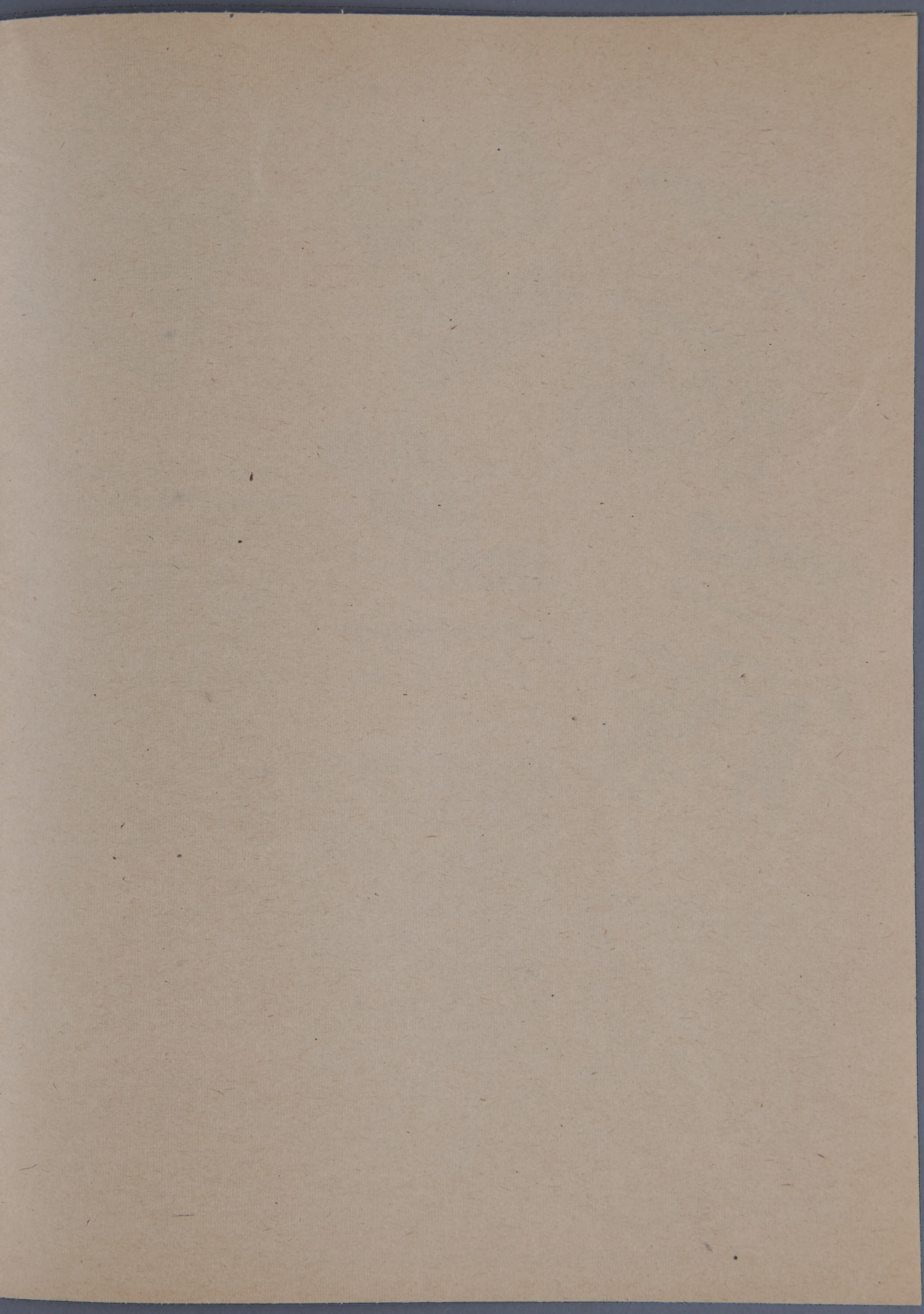
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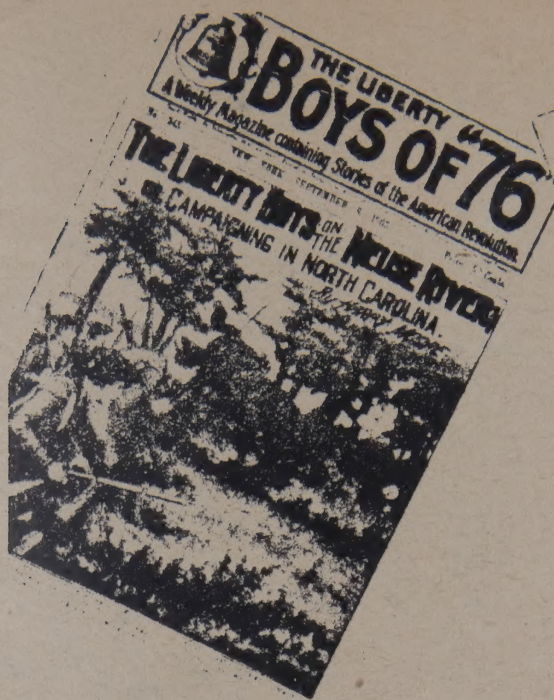
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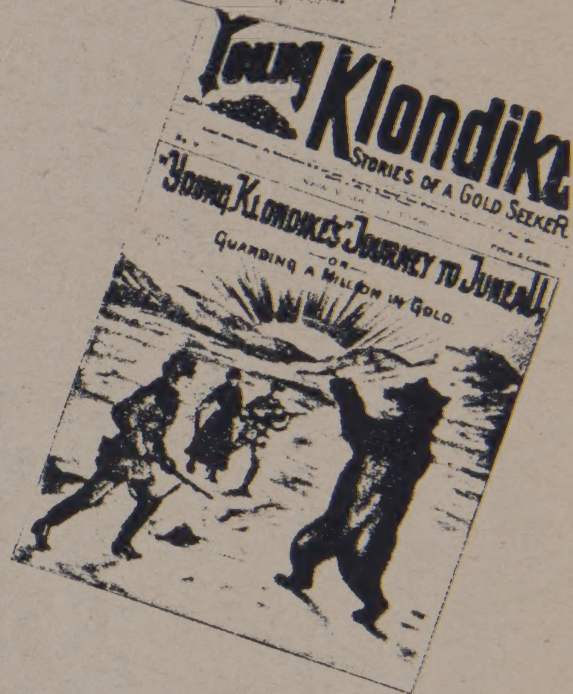
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FROM
TRUE Magazine
April 1946.



CRACK! BANG! CRACK!

BY RICHARD HANSER

Bushwhacker Ben rides again,
and Fred Farnot, in these
wonderful old dime novels

The Dime Novel Club doesn't give a hoot for newfangled books of significance and novels of literary distinction. Its large, growing and fanatical clientele is interested only in the gore and glory of the authentic dime novel, an original American art form which is undergoing a startling revival of interest. The James boys are riding again, Old King Brady is once more on the prowl for crooks, Deadwood Dick, Prince of the Road, is clapping fresh spurs to his trusty steed, and Gentleman Joe, the Gilt-Edged Sport, is back at dealing faro, as thousands gasp from coast to coast.

And what red-blooded reader, after all, could be content with the effete and watered-down prose of modern literature after sampling the pulsating stuff that surges through every page of the pristine dime novel? Stuff like this, from "Frank James on the Trail":

"Crack!"

"Bang!"

"Crack!"

A volley of pistol and rifle shots whistled above their heads.

Frank drew his surest revolver and examined it.

"Crack!"

The report rang out almost as loud as a rifle shot.

The smoke gradually rose and lifted a veil from their eyes and a riderless horse was seen.

"Crack!"

"Crack!"

"By God, I'm hit!" said Frank.

"For mercy's sake where?" asked Polk.

"One of my spurs taken off, I guess," and Frank laughed heartily to think it was no worse.

"Crack!"

"Crack!"

The bullets whizzed and rattled, the reports clanged and clacked . . .

Where in the pap that passes for literature today can the equal of such a passage,

common enough in the dime novel field, be found? In that small compass the reader is treated, by actual count, to seven cracks and one bang, a comical joke delivered by Frank James in the face of death, and to all sorts of bullets whizzing, rattling, clanking and clacking.

The genius behind the dime novel revival is a retired Brooklyn exporter named Charles Bragin. For more than 40 years, with the aid of eager scouts all over the country, he has collected 20,000 dime novels, which gives him a certain air of condescension when speaking of the 2,500 dime novels in the rare book vaults of the Library of Congress and the mere 1,500 in the New York Public Library. The club issues facsimile reproductions of a dime novel every month to its members for \$1.00. Bragin used to sell choice numbers to President Roosevelt, who was an ardent fan.

Bragin is full of strange and scholarly dime novel lore, about which he knows everything. He compiles bibliographies which libraries file away in their Americana sections; he is consulted by collectors and gives advice on first editions and similar esoteric subjects. He points out that the dime novel converted Buffalo Bill from an obscure frontiersman into a world famous figure and that Col. Prentiss Ingraham, an Englishman, wrote Buffalo Bill dime novels for 20 years. Lu Senarens, Bragin will tell you, was the American Jules Verne who

wrote dime novels under the name of "No-name" and foreshadowed in his yarns the armored tank, the modern submarine, and all types of airships, some of which haven't yet been invented but doubtless will be.

At one time, for a period of 50 years, the dime novel enjoyed a tremendous vogue throughout the United States, a vogue comparable to that of the comic books and the radio cliff-hanger serial of today, for both of which, incidentally, it laid the groundwork in style and technique. Dime novels sold by the millions at a time when "million" was an awesome figure in circulation of printed matter. The dime novel became a national issue, and was denounced in press, pulpit and Sunday schools as an immoral and degrading influence on the young.

But the dime novel fell on evil days. It became respectable. In 1899 it was struck a damaging blow when a speaker used the dime novel as the theme of a commencement address at Harvard.

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